

Israel to open skies to Jordan

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israel is ready to open its sea and airports to Jordan as well as allow the Kingdom to use its airspace when flying to Europe, the transport minister said Monday. The offer is conditioned on Israel getting the same rights, the statement from Transport Minister Yisrael Kessar's office added. In November 1993, Mr. Kessar announced that Jordan had asked permission to fly over Israel on made. On Thursday, Mr. Kessar told the director of Geneva-based International Air Transport Association, Pierre Jeannot, that Israel was prepared to make offer. "Israel is ready to allow Jordan to use its sea and airports, Israel has told Jordan it will be allowed to fly over Israel to European points on the basis of mutuality between the two countries," the statement from Mr. Kessar's office said. Airlines flying over the Middle East often add up to one hour to flight times by avoiding huge stretches of airspace over hostile nations. Israel's El Al, which now flies to Bombay and Bangkok, would save up to two hours if it could use Jordanian, Saudi Arabian and Gulf airspace. But access to Jordanian airspace alone would not lessen the travel time.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تيمز يومية مستقلة بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية، الرائي

Darawshe offers Syria mediation

TEL AVIV (AP) — An Arab member of Israel's parliament said Monday he had asked Syrian President Hafez Al Assad to allow an Israeli-Arab delegation to visit Damascus, saying it could help encourage the peace process. "I believe that we Israeli Arabs can play an active role in bridging the gap between Israel and its Arab neighbours," Abdul Wahab Darawshe told the Associated Press. "I think the proof is the role we played in getting Israel and the PLO together." Mr. Darawshe, head of the Democratic Arab Party which controls two seats in the 120-member Knesset, said that he had asked Mr. Assad in a letter to allow an Israeli-Arab delegation to visit Syria soon. Mr. Darawshe, one of seven Arabs in parliament, said Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa had agreed to contact Syrian officials to press for approval. He said that he expected an answer within two days. Mr. Darawshe said that Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin is aware of his request to visit Syria and said he would meet with Mr. Rabin before making any trip to Syria.

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King meets Arab envoys to U.S.

AMMAN (Petra) — Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor received at their residence here Monday Arab ambassadors to the United States. The King briefed the envoys on his meeting with President Bill Clinton, Jordan's support for the peace process and the necessity to bring about a comprehensive, just and durable peace in the Middle East. He stressed the need for a unified Arab position and a high level of coordination among the Arab countries. Present at the meeting were Prime Minister Dr. Abdul Salam Majali, Royal Court Chief Sharif Zaid Ben Shaker, Minister of Information Jawad Anani, Minister of Finance Sami Gamhoh and Jordanian Ambassador to the U.S. Fayez Tarawneh.

King sends messages to Yemeni leaders

AMMAN (Petra) — The King's advisor Khaled Al Karaki returned to Amman Monday after a one-day visit to Yemen where he met with Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh and Vice-President Salim Ali Al Beedh. Dr. Karaki delivered to the Yemeni leaders a message from His Majesty King Hussein dealing with bilateral relations and the situation in Yemen. Dr. Karaki said the two leaders expressed their appreciation for King Hussein's role in solving the political crisis in Yemen.

Rania Atalla to head JIB in Washington

AMMAN (J.T.) — Rania Atalla, deputy director of the Jordan Information Bureau in Washington, was Sunday appointed as director of the bureau. Ms. Atalla, who joined the bureau in February 1991, will assume her new responsibilities at the beginning of March. She succeeds Marwan Munasher, who is the spokesman for the Jordanian delegation to the Arab-Israeli peace negotiations. Twenty-eight-year-old Ms. Atalla has a masters degree in political science from Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., and had previously worked as a reporter at the Jordan Times.

Arab stabs two Israelis in Jerusalem

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — An Arab stabbard and slightly wounded two Israelis in central Jerusalem on Monday. The incident, in which the Arab was touched off by a work-related argument, police said. The Arab, who is an Israeli citizen, was seen in an electrical store and stabbed him in the hand with a screwdriver. He then ran outside and stabbed another Israeli in the head. Police said the attacker was caught and the two Israelis were taken to hospital.

U.S. rejects French call to impose Bosnia peace

PARIS (Agencies) — France, warning of dire consequences if a new approach is not found, asked the United States on Monday to join in imposing a peace settlement on Bosnia, but Washington rejected the idea, U.S. officials said. Foreign Minister Alain Juppe, in talks with Secretary of State Warren Christopher, "raised the possibility of imposing a settlement," a senior U.S. official told reporters. "But we made clear that we would not support the idea of imposing a settlement on the aggrieved party, putting pressure on the Muslims," the official said.

Samples, records said missing from drug control department

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Large quantities of medicine that were presented to the pharmacy and drug control department at the Ministry of Health before October for testing and registration were not recorded or tested and their whereabouts cannot be accounted for, informed sources said Monday.

The sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the missing medicines, which were submitted to the department as testing samples by drug companies, were large enough in volume to supply pharmacies.

The sources cited the quantities of drug testing samples that accumulated at the department since administrative changes took place there almost three months ago as an indication of how large the missing quantities were. Drug companies and importers usually submit more than one sample of the same drug for testing, the sources said. The tests used to be conducted on one sample only, they said.

They said the Ministry of Health recently caught a shipment of these drugs as they were being illicitly transported out of the department.

The sources also said that many of the files and records of the department were missing since the administrative

changes were effected by Minister of Health Abdul Rahim Malhas.

Sources also pointed that the department had more than once approved the sale of drugs that were not registered at the Ministry of Health when large government tenders were being processed.

Senior positions at the department were filled by people who owned private pharmacies or had interests with drug companies, the sources said.

The sources said that the minister of health has recently introduced major reshuffles in senior positions at the department.

They said that a senior department official who owned a private pharmacy was transferred to another position. Another senior official, who was closely related to a representative of a major drug company in Jordan, was pensioned off.

A senior official at the inspection section of the department was retired last week. The official owned a private pharmacy, the sources said.

The duties of the section, the sources said, were to carry out regular inspections of private pharmacies to make sure that drugs sold there have been tested and approved by the Ministry of Health.

The sources said that at least three of the eight-member inspection team for Amman

Regent calls for probe panel

HIS ROYAL Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Monday called for the formation of a committee to investigate charges raised by Health Minister Abdul Rahim Malhas, of violations of specifications and standards by pharmacists and food merchants. Prince Hassan thanked Dr. Malhas for raising the issue. He also noted that Jordanian pharmaceutical products enjoy good reputation abroad.

The Regent made the comments during a visit to Balqa Governorate (see separate story)

owned private pharmacies. The sources said that the section ends its work at 2 p.m. and no inspection of pharmacies takes place after that time.

Minister Malhas Friday pointed to a conflict of interest among the people who were in charge of authorising the sale of medicine in the market.

The minister told the Jordan Times that he has reorganised the pharmacy and drug control department to create a drug inspection section independent of the pharmacy department.

Sources said that the law on the control of drugs was part of

the law on pharmacies in Jordan.

Shihan, an Arabic-language weekly, Thursday quoted Dr. Malhas as saying that a good quantity of food and medicine that reach the market do not meet standards and specifications.

Dr. Malhas told the Jordan Times Friday that there was a deficiency in laws governing the sale of food and medicine pointing to the need for new legislation that protects consumers.

Spokesmen and presidents of parliamentary committees said Monday that the Lower House of Parliament will Wednesday set a date for a session during which the government will explain its policies on food and drugs as well as its "stand" on Dr. Malhas' statements.

In a statement issued after a closed meeting, the deputies said: "The situation is serious and should be handled with seriousness in order to protect the health of the people, the reputation of the country and its national economy."

The statement, which was read out to journalists by Acting House Speaker Abdul Razzaq Tubeishat, said deputies will propose appropriate solutions to the problem after the government explains the measures it will take to deal

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Delegation heads meet in secret locations

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Middle East peace talks between the Arabs and Israelis were resuming Monday in undisclosed locations after a four-month hiatus following the signing of an Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) peace accord.

Only heads of delegations from Israel, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and the Palestinians were to meet and, unlike the past 11 encounters, this time they will meet in undisclosed locations away from the media. Jordan's Ambassador to the U.S. Fayez Al Tarawneh said the meetings would define the shape of the next round of the Arab-Israeli bilateral talks.

In a telephone interview with Jordan Television Monday evening, Dr. Tarawneh, who heads the Jordanian delegation to the talks, said Jordan insisted on having the negotiations going on in separate tracks for the countries involved as was provided for in the 1991 Madrid conference which launched the peace process.

He said although Jordan and Israel had reached an agreement on the agenda of their talks Sept. 14, 1993, the two countries were not able to start discussing issues listed on the agenda.

"Therefore, we were keen on keeping the formula on separate tracks proceeding simultaneously with our brethren so that we can start discussing the details of the agenda," he said.

Dr. Tarawneh said the U.S. would maintain its role as co-sponsor of the peace talks and facilitate the negotiating process.

"As co-sponsors of the talks, they will not participate in the discussions, but will be informed on the progress of the talks to hold evaluations on the coming stages," he said.

Itamar Rahinovitch, Israel's head of delegation with Syria and ambassador to the United States, said experience has taught them that it has been "counterproductive" for negotiators to answer reporters' questions.

Talks will also be "less structured" (Continued on page 5)

Israel, Egypt voice optimism for Israel-PLO compromise

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israeli and Egyptian leaders sounded a chorus of optimism Monday, saying they were confident key obstacles blocking the start of Palestinian autonomy could be overcome within a few days.

The upbeat statement came as the pace of Israeli-Arab talks picked up with talks to resume in Washington between Israel and Syria after months of suspension.

After an hour-long meeting with his Egyptian counterpart Amr Musa, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said "a basis has been created" for a possible agreement on overcoming obstacles to implementing the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) accord.

"We hope that the next few days will be fruitful in pushing forward the work on the Palestinian-Israeli track towards a solution," Mr. Musa told reporters.

Mr. Musa flew in unexpectedly for a six-hour visit with a message from Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak who met Sunday with PLO Chair-

man Yasser Arafat.

Mr. Musa said he hoped Mr. Peres and Mr. Arafat could reach agreement by the time they met again Saturday in the Swiss resort of Davos. Radio reports quoted Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin as saying Mr. Peres and Mr. Arafat had five main points to overcome in Switzerland, but he did not list the points. Mr. Peres and Mr. Arafat met last weekend in Oslo, Norway.

"The problems at hand are still serious, but we are working on them," Mr. Musa said. "We hope the last meetings, including the one between Arafat and Peres, will give the last push for final progress."

Asked whether he concurred that agreement could be reached in Davos, Mr. Peres replied, "It is possible, it wasn't yet completed."

Later, Prime Minister Rabin, who also met with Mr. Musa, also sounded upbeat.

"There are signs of coming together," Mr. Rabin said. "There is progress, but it will take time."

The Israel-PLO talks have

deadlocked over control of border crossings and the size of an autonomous Jericho under the Sept. 13 deal for limited Palestinian autonomy in the West Bank town and the Gaza Strip.

Israel wants to control the border crossings while the Palestinians are opposed to continuing an Israeli presence there.

Mr. Peres suggested some flexibility in an interview with Israel Radio, saying Israel was agreeable to using more electronic monitoring, "without the need to strip search anyone and without the need to make people wait hours in line."

"There has been more than a little suffering at the crossings," Mr. Peres said.

However, Mr. Rabin later was quoted as telling a closed-door meeting of parliament's foreign affairs and defence committee that Israel would insist on the right to conduct security checks in a "sterile room," meaning only Israeli officials would be present. He

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King Fahd meets Arafat and reaffirms his support

RIYADH (Agencies) — Saudi Arabia's King Fahd met Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat here on Monday for the first time since the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) infuriating the Saudi leader by supporting Iraq after the invasion of Kuwait.

A Palestinian diplomat described the encounter as "very friendly" and said the king "expressed his support and that of his government and the Saudi kingdom for the Palestinian cause and people."

They discussed the PLO-Israel negotiations and other Palestinian issues, the diplomat added.

Mr. Arafat arrived in Riyadh earlier Monday from the western city of Jeddah after making a pilgrimage to Islam's holiest sites in nearby Mecca.

Mr. Arafat embraced Saudi Arabia by supporting Iraq after the August 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Saudi Arabia, which had been the PLO's principal financial backer, cut off its annual \$85.5 million subsidy because of the PLO's stand.

Monday's meeting was also attended by Saudi Defence Minister Sultan Ben Abdul Aziz and Riyadh Governor Prince Salman Ben Abdul Aziz.

The visit should open a new chapter in ties between the PLO and the kingdom and marks a normalisation in relations with Saudi Arabia, which has been actively sought by the Palestinian leadership, a Palestinian diplomat said.

"Relations with Saudi Arabia are a top priority for us."

Attempts for a reconciliation a year ago fell apart when Mr. Arafat received the "Mother of All Battles" medal from Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in Baghdad.

The Palestinian leader is seeking a reconciliation with the influential Saudi monarch as well as political and economic support for Palestinian self-rule.

Saudi Television showed the king and Mr. Arafat embracing each other at the Yamama Palace.

King Fahd expressed "readiness to support the Palestinian cause in all spheres," said Yasser Abed Rabbo, a member of the PLO's Executive Committee, he did not elaborate.

But the Saudi media made no comment on the discussions. The King and Mr. Arafat met for one hour.

It was Mr. Arafat's first trip to the kingdom since Aug. 7, 1990, when he travelled to the Red Sea port of Jeddah and unsuccessfully tried to persuade Mr. Fahd to accept a Palestinian-Libyan peace plan to end the Gulf crisis.

While in Jeddah, he told the Associated Press Monday that he hoped the kingdom would end the rift. "This is a subject

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His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Monday chats with travellers aboard a bus at the King Hussein Bridge

Regent says tests established King is in excellent health

Crown Prince visits King Hussein Bridge and Salt and reaffirms national stands

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, said Monday that the recent tests that His Majesty King Hussein underwent at the Mayo clinic in the United States proved beyond any doubt that he was completely cured and that there was no trace whatsoever of the disease that warranted surgery a year and a half ago.

"I would like to break the news to you that there is no trace of any disease," the Regent said at a meeting held at the Salt Community College attended by notables and deputies from Balqa Governorate and heads of local government departments.

The Regent said King Hussein had reassured him in a telephone conversation about his health and conveyed his best greetings to the Jordanian people.

Discussing issues of concern to the people of Balqa region, the Regent said: "I would like to remind you of the need to observe the 'Orphans Day' as

your grandfathers did in the 1930s and 1940s."

He urged the local residents and the local charitable societies to observe this anniversary because "caring for the orphans is something complementary to the zakat (alms for the poor) and we have to work together to highlight this anniversary."

The Regent urged citizens to safeguard national unity as a fundamental principle, "as upheld since the days of the late King Abdullah Ben Al Hussein, who described the Palestinians as taking refuge in their own homeland."

The government's decentralisation policy, the Prince said, will not infringe on the rights of any one.

He suggested that Salt city set up its own local parliament. Peace, he said, is "an extension to war in another form and the peace process highlights the manner in which we address the outside world."

The Regent said that Jordan was enhancing the march to

democracy as envisaged by King Hussein "from the base to the top so that Jordan becomes a fortress for democracy."

The Regent rejected allegations that Jordan seeks hegemony and said that Jordan constituted no axis against anyone and that it would remain "faithful to the cause of the Arab Nation and supportive of the Palestinians."

Referring to his meetings with travellers to the West Bank, the Regent said that his visit reiterates Jordan's determination to maintain strong ties between the Arab people on the West and East Banks of the River Jordan.

"Strong ties should be maintained between the two sides so that we can confront the common threats that face the Arab and Islamic identity on this land," the Regent said.

The Prince reaffirmed that decentralisation was in the best national interest.

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Taba talks on security postponed

TABA (Agencies) — Negotiations between the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel on security issues delaying Israel's withdrawal from occupied land were postponed Monday until after another meeting of top officials from both sides.

The negotiations were scheduled to resume Tuesday, but PLO delegate Abdul Razzaq Al Yahia said they would be put off until next week while PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres hold talks in Switzerland.

It was unclear if the postponement was a setback or signalled expected progress from a second Arafat-Peres meeting planned during an international economic forum in Switzerland.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said Sunday that he saw hopes for ending the stalemate from talks between Mr. Arafat and Mr. Peres last week in Oslo, Norway.

The spokesman for the Israeli negotiators, Ami Gluska, issued a statement confirming the delay and saying Mr. Peres and Mr. Arafat were expected to meet over the weekend.

The decision to delay the security discussion was made by the two chief negotiators, the PLO's Nabil Shaath and Israeli Major General Amnon Shahak, General Yahia said.

He said there was a telephone call "between Amnon and Nabil this morning and they agreed to the postponement."

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U.S. urges Russia not to slow pace of reform

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The United States is urging Russia not to slow the pace of reform, Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott said Monday, warning that the alternative is hyperinflation and economic collapse.

"We are concerned by the departure of key reform leaders from the government and the effect that the new composition of the parliament will have on the future of economic reform," Mr. Talbott told a Senate appropriations subcommittee.

Mr. Talbott's comments outlined U.S. policy towards Moscow in light of the resignations last week of Yegor Gaidar as Russia's Deputy Prime Minister and Boris Fyodorov as finance minister.

"We are urging the Russian government, at the highest level, not to slow the pace of reform," Mr. Talbott told the committee.

The committee is reviewing the \$2.5 billion in aid President Bill Clinton has promised the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in 1994.

"Our support will follow their reform. It cannot be the

other way around," Mr. Talbott said.

He said U.S. humanitarian aid to Russia — about \$1.5 billion in food and medicine — will continue but otherwise "we have to gear our response to policy."

"Gradual reform is a prescription for hyperinflation and economic collapse," he said.

The new Russian government has pledged to reduce inflation from 18 per cent a month to nine per cent a month by the end of the year — a goal far short of the five per cent a month level demanded by the International Monetary Fund as a requisite for its continued support.

Since ultra-nationalist leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's victory in parliamentary elections Dec. 12, the United States has decided to intensify socially-oriented aid to ease the pain of economic reform.

"The best strategic approach is to provide technical advice to help the Russian government in those areas that are most in need of economic restructuring and whose restructuring

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Algerian parties shun conference

ALGIERS (Agencies) — Algeria's political parties have shunned an attempt by the five-man presidency to bring together all sides in a national conference intended to steer the country out of two years of violence.

The National Liberation Front (FLN), which ran Algeria as a one-party state for more than 25 years after independence from France in 1962, said Saturday it would not attend the two-day national meeting which starts on Tuesday.

On Sunday the Republican Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD) also bowed out. The Berber-based Front for Social Forces (FFS) had already said it would not attend.

Algeria's leaders, due to step down this month, planned the conference to find a way to end two years of violence in which at least 1,900 people — Muslim fundamentalists, security forces and ordinary citizens — have been killed.

They had appealed to politicians to support it.

"What merit is there in such a conference?" asked Hacene Ouandjeli, editor-in-chief of the independent daily *Liberte*. "None, or virtually none."

"The decisions taken there will be tainted by illegitimacy because they will not be the result of the consensus initially sought."

The violence began after the authorities in January 1992 cancelled a general election which the fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was poised to win. A court later banned the FIS and most of its leaders were either imprisoned or went underground.

Since the poll was scrapped, Algeria has been ruled by an unelected five-man presidency, which has promised to step down at the end of January.

The conference is due to endorse its replacement by a two- or three-man group, yet to be named, to rule Algeria for the next three years, as well as to select a 180-member assembly.

For the past two months, the authorities have quietly sought to entice the FIS to join in the conference, but have not met any of its key conditions, including freeing its top leaders.

Diplomats say it is inconceivable that the FIS will come to the table barring last-minute concessions that few expect.

"To have this national conference while knowing that the FIS, the FFS and the FLN will not participate — it's show business," said one senior diplomat. "It is a theatre play that goes on stage on Jan. 25."

The FLN and FFS had also made respectable showings in the 1992 elections.

The FLN gave no reasons for its boycott but has said it did not want to join in a "fictional consensus" that would exclude any influential part of society, an allusion to the FIS.

It announced its decision just hours after head of state Ali Kafi asked all sides to work to overcome the country's problems.

"Let us not speak of who brought us to this crisis," Mr. Kafi said. "What is important is that this crisis is the sum of many accumulated factors to which everyone contributed."

He added: "We must rise up in a single row to think calmly. Calm is needed now, because the crisis is serious, very serious, and profound."

Diplomats said that without the FIS joining in, there was virtually no chance that the violence would end.

"I really don't see how it can diminish," said one diplomat. "If they have not succeeded in winning over major parts of the political spectrum, that means that it will probably go on, perhaps at a higher level."

On Sunday, the official Algerian news agency said a Tunisian politician had been killed in his shop in central Algiers, the 27th foreigner to be killed since last September.

It also reported that security forces had killed four militants last week, two in Algiers, one in the neighbouring town of Boumerdes and one in the southwestern town of Tiarret.

U.N. struggles to leave Somalia with democracy

By Thomas Wagner
The Associated Press

BAIDOA — As U.S. troops withdraw from Somalia and the world reconsiders its mission here, the United Nations is bawling trouble introducing democracy in a country that has seen little but dictatorship and war.

Even long-time observers, such as U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali, feel that while advances towards a democratic system are being made, they could easily collapse like a house of cards.

But that does not mean the first taste of representative government is not winning followers in a country just 34 years old that is still recovering from famine and civil war.

Consider what is happening in Baidoa, a town that has been transformed from the hellhole of Somalia's famine into a U.N. success story.

With the help of U.N. officials, the region's clan elders appointed a representative district council in June and a regional council in September.

"Under dictator Mohammed Siad Barre, we had no freedom. This is our first real taste of democracy," said Ibrahim Ali Ahmad, chairman of the district council and a member of one of the area's 25 sub-clans and tribes.

For the first time since the famine, international relief agencies are working with the new local government to force Somali companies to bid for contracts to transport food and supplies in trucks.

All this is new in Baidoa, where Mr. Siad Barre's government was considered an alien force imposed by outsiders. The local councils that existed then were not representative or independent of Mr. Siad Barre.

Clan elders were the closest thing to a local government. They settled land disputes and decided who would pay a murder victim's family. In Somalia's male-dominated Muslim society, elders often charged murderers 100 camels if they killed a man and 50 if they killed a woman.

The only people who paid anything resembling taxes were the nomads who paid to water their camels at local wells.

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transitional national government — are exciting for the many people who have never seen anything like them.

"The clans of this area are now talking and working together on councils for the first time to protect this area and develop it," said Malik Hassan Ali Katar, the 89-year-old elder of the Yantar sub-clan.

Dressed in a traditional Somali shawl over his head and shoulders and fighting back tears, he said: "We only hope our new councils will preserve our peace and stability."

When Mr. Siad Barre was overthrown in January 1991, 350,000 Somalis died in the civil war and famine that followed. In Baidoa, hundreds of people died every day. Many bodies were found lying in the streets at sunrise.

Today, most of Baidoa's brick and stone homes remain pockmarked with bullet holes and without roofs. But stores have reopened and few people carry weapons openly, even though the U.N. troops stationed here don't patrol most streets.

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Mr. Siad Barre's entire system collapsed when he was overthrown. In its place, the United Nations is trying to put together a new system based on 92 district councils, 18 regional councils and, ultimately, a national assembly.

The councils are meant to be drawn from a representative cross-section of society in an attempt to reduce the influence of dozens of warlords and wealthy political brokers.

The councils are "a huge step forward, even though the political process has a long way to go in some places," said Ken Menkhaus, a political adviser for the U.N. operation in Somalia.

But only 54 district councils and eight regional ones have been formed. The U.N. goals of appointing a transitional national assembly this month and holding democratic national elections remain far off.

There have been disputes about council appointments. In Baidoa, the Harar sub-clan held demonstrations last month to complain that its members did not win any top positions.

Mohammad Farah Aided, the powerful warlord who controls the southern half of Mogadishu, the capital, has rejected the whole procedure and demanded that all U.N. soldiers rejected the leave the country.

Gen. Aided's allies have blocked the formation of some district councils through intimidation and have formed their own councils.

All this has left U.N. officials worried. "Many of the district councils lack the resources to become fully operational," Dr. Ghali reported to the security council, which will soon decide how many troops will stay in Somalia after U.S. forces withdraw.

If too few soldiers remain and the people fail to form a transitional government, "there could be an early resumption of civil strife and an unraveling of all that has been achieved," Dr. Ghali said.

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Somalis pin hope on elders

By Buchizya Mseteka
Reuters

MOGADISHU — Somalis are pinning their hopes for peace on a watershed accord signed by rival clan elders, but political analysts say the country's two most powerful warlords must themselves come to terms for it to succeed.

The elders of warlords Mohammad Farah Aided's Habir Gadir sub-clan and Ali Mahdi Mohammad's Abgal sub-clan cemented a pact a week ago after months of tough bargaining. The pact calls for an end to hostilities between the two factions.

Both men, whose bitter feud in 1991 led to civil war, have at least welcomed the agreement.

But that is not enough, political analysts say. Direct reconciliation must take place.

"A peace accord between Somalia's rival clan elders is a step in the right direction but there's no way it is going to hold or even push the peace process ahead without a direct reconciliation deal between the two men," a U.N. diplomat told Reuters.

The agreement was negotiated by the imam of Hirah, spiritual leader of the Hawiye clan, which embraces both sub-clans. Critics say the deal only addresses inter-clan hostilities.

It does not resolve, or attempt to address, the political differences between General Aided and Mr. Ali Mahdi, differences which could prompt a fresh outbreak of fighting after the March 31 departure of the last U.S. troops and their Western allies.

Citing security concerns after 18 U.S. Army Rangers were killed in battles with Gen. Aided's militia in October, the United States, Belgium, Italy, Germany and Greece have said they will leave the 25,000-strong U.N. army in Somalia by March 31.

"Unless the imam takes his peace process further and brings the two men around a table to talk peace, there's a chance the whole thing could backslide," an aid worker told Reuters.

This view was echoed by a senior member of Gen. Aided's umbrella Somali National Alliance (SNA). He declined to be named.

"The imam's peace process, which we all welcome, needs to be pushed further ahead by tackling the political issues facing Somalia today," he said.

He added: "We need to bring the political groups together to chart out a future for this country. We need a political reconciliation conference to work out a package acceptable to all groups."

A U.N.-sponsored conference on Somalia collapsed last December. Somalia has been without a government since January 1991 after rebels overthrew dictator Mohammad Siad Barre.

The rebels then turned their guns on one another. Most Somalis are convinced peace is on the way. They point to reconciliation statements made by Gen. Aided's chief financier and right-hand man Osman Hassan "Atto", released from U.N. detention last Wednesday.

Mr. Atto's stance was in sharp contrast to Gen. Aided's latest statements. Last week the warlord demanded an immediate end to the U.N. operation in Somalia and withdrawal of all its troops.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Israeli cabinet introduce anti-pork bill

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israel's cabinet approved a bill Sunday that would ban the import of nonkosher meat, in exchange for promises from religious lawmakers to support mid-east peace efforts. The bill, which would amend a free-trade law, was approved by 12 cabinet ministers with four opposing. It must pass three majority votes in the 120-member parliament before becoming law. Mr. Rubinstein said it would likely be brought to a vote within a few weeks. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin promised the legislation known as the "pork bill" last year to appease nine legislators from fervently religious parties. They have sought for years to legislate meat that does not fit Jewish dietary or kosher laws. Pork is not kosher. The religious legislators promised Mr. Rabin in exchange that they would either support or abstain in votes pertaining to peace negotiations with the Arabs. Votes from the religious sector, which tends to be right-wing, could be crucial to Mr. Rabin. Without their support, Mr. Rabin has backing from only a bare majority of 61, including five Arab lawmakers. The supreme court tried to pass a similar bill last summer, but the supreme court overruled it when it upheld an appeal by meat importers that the bill violated a law guaranteeing free trade.

Woman soldier punished for rooftop sex

TEL AVIV (AP) — A woman soldier was kicked out of her unit for conducting night manoeuvres with her paratrooper boyfriend on a roof in the occupied West Bank town of Hebron, an Israeli daily reported Sunday. The residents of the town, a stronghold of fundamentalist Muslims, complained to the paratrooper company commander that the repeated rooftop sex corrupted youth and embarrassed elders, the Yediot Achronot daily said. The commander transferred the woman from the unit and reprimanded her boyfriend, Yediot said. Other women soldiers complained the punishment was uneven. Women in Israeli army combat units serve in non-combat roles such as secretaries, medics, teachers and social workers. The army spokesman's office "was not interested" in commenting on the matter, an official said.

Three Turks die in building cave-in

ANKARA (R) — Three workers died and 12 others were believed trapped when a building under construction caved in on Sunday in western Turkey, Anatolia news agency reported. Three workers were also injured in the collapse of the five-storey building in Cerkezoy, Thrace. Rescue teams are trying to reach the trapped workers.

Kuwait reports arms at Palestinian mission

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Kuwait police seized machine-guns, pistols and ammunition at the embassy of Palestine here recently, which has been unoccupied since the 1991 Gulf war, Kuwait newspapers reported. The prosecutor general ordered a search of the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) mission in Kuwait after a tip-off from a suspected burglar, who told police he had obtained arms there. Police did not specify when the captured weapons were stored at the mission. No Palestinian officials have visited the mission since U.S.-led forces ousted Iraqi troops from the emirate in February 1991, after a seven-month occupation. Kuwait suspended ties with the PLO after the liberation, accusing it of having supported Iraq during the Gulf crisis. After the war the Kuwaiti authorities announced several major seizures of weapons abandoned by the Iraqi army.

Refugees start repatriation from Djibouti

DJIBOUTI (AFP) — Around 2,000 refugees from northern Somalia and the Ogaden province of Ethiopia were transferred Sunday to a camp 26 kilometres south of Djibouti as a first stage of their repatriation. The refugees, some of whom fled hunger and war in their homelands more than four years ago, were taken in around 20 trucks to the Holi-Holi camp from a massive refugee squatter town which grew up on the edge of the tiny Gulf of Aden state capital. Police set fire to the refugees' wood, cardboard, and corrugated iron homes to discourage them from returning. Increasing numbers of refugees, who often prefer to shun official camps for the shanty towns and begging on the streets, have begun to pose a health and safety headache to Djibouti. Around 20,000 refugees are to be sent home to north-east Somalia and 7,000 to Ethiopia under a programme drawn up by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Egyptian group urges boycott of Chanel

CAIRO (R) — The religious affairs committee of Egypt's parliament has urged Muslims to boycott the French fashion house Chanel for insulting Muslims by embroidering Koranic verses on low-cut bodices. The committee issued its appeal on Sunday night after a meeting to consider measures against the fashion house. "It is necessary for French organisations to respect Muslim feelings in any of their activities," it said in a statement. Muslims protested after German model Claudia Schiffer strode down a Paris catwalk a week ago wearing a tight black bustier embroidered with the verses in grey pearls. "The act hurt Muslim's feelings worldwide and ridiculed their Holy Book," the leader of the parliamentary committee, Ahmad Omar Hashim, said in a statement. Chanel Chairman Claude Etienne apologised to the French Muslim community and Muslim theologians, explained how the mistake was made and promised to convey Chanel's apologies to the world's Muslims. Chanel's designer Karl Lagerfeld, who has many Arabs among his clients, has said he took the design from a book on India's Taj Mahal and had been told it was a love poem. The verses on the dresses said: "He whom God guides is well-guided, and he who is abandoned by God will find no one to put him on the right road." The opposition newspaper Al Wafd said one member of parliament promised to take the issue to the full house for debate.

Architect of PLO accord is Rabin's lightning rod

By Nicolas B. Tatro
The Associated Press

TEL AVIV — Want to know what Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin is thinking about the future? Listen to Yossi Beilin.

That's what politicians of both the left and right say about the growing influence of the deputy foreign minister, who sits in on top-level meetings and has more clout than most cabinet ministers.

Mr. Beilin, 45, won acclaim for setting up the secret "Oslo channel" for talks with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and appears to have become Mr. Rabin's main adviser on peacekeeping strategy.

In an interview at his cubbyhole office in the parliament building, the former professor of politics said his straight talk is part of the shock therapy he prescribes for bringing change in the Middle East.

"I'm very afraid of group-think," he said. "In policy making, it leads to big pitfalls. Nothing is more dangerous." In a rare burst of passion, he added: "I'm haunted by it."

Mr. Beilin, who favours dark suits and ties in a coun-

try noted for open collars, appears to relish his role as iconoclast, even though it reinforces the arguments of critics that his radical views are out of step with the public.

He caused his first uproar five years ago as deputy finance minister, shocking Israelis weaned on socialism by declaring the country would have to get used to high unemployment.

With similarly little regard for political sensitivities, he has recently issued these challenges to some basic assumptions that have governed strategic thinking for a generation:

— Settling the Golan Heights was a mistake and its strategic importance as a buffer has declined.

— The Jordan River is not essential to Israel's security.

— Israel is wealthy and does not need charity from Jewish communities abroad. It seeks real dialogue with U.S. Jewish groups, not "standing ovals" from them.

For years, Mr. Beilin has been seen as a stalking horse for his mentor, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres. The two were so close that Mr. Rabin, a longtime rival of Mr. Peres in the Labour Party, once called

Mr. Beilin "Peres' poodle." These days, Mr. Beilin is seen more as point man for Mr. Rabin's peacekeeping with the Arab World, spelling out in plain language what other officials only hint at.

He says, for example, that most of the West Bank and all of Gaza will likely return to Arab control. Mr. Rabin has avoided talking about the extent of "territorial concessions."

Mr. Beilin's comments about Jewish settlers are especially blunt.

"They will have the choice of leaving the territories or remaining there under Arab sovereignty," he said in the AP interview.

Insiders say Mr. Rabin allows Beilin room to explore policy options and finds it useful to have him take the heat on issues like the Jewish settlers.

When Mr. Beilin goes too far, Mr. Rabin reins him in. At a recent cabinet meeting, Mr. Rabin reprimanded Mr. Beilin for his statement that settling the Golan had been a mistake, describing the remark as "thoughtless."

An aide said Mr. Rabin was irked more by the timing than the substance of the comment, which stirred up

Jewish settlers just before the U.S.-Syria summit.

If Mr. Beilin has lost ground with the prime minister, insiders say, it is over the vagueness of the PLO-Israel accord, which is proving difficult to implement because so many details were left unresolved.

Those who see Mr. Beilin as a future leader are generous in their praise.

"He's a voice for a sane and new Israel," said Uri Dromi, director of the government press office. "He has the courage to speak his mind, which for a politician is exceptional. This brings him a lot of respect, but he also takes a lot of flak."

His critics — Jewish settlers, some American fund-raisers, even members of his own party — shower him with epithets.

Simcha Dimitz, chairman of the World Zionist Organisation, accused Mr. Beilin of "callosity" urging a halt to private donations at a time when Israel needs money to settle Russian immigrants.

Harvey Friedman of the America-Israel Public Affairs Committee called him a "little slime ball." Mr. Friedman was forced to resign.

Right-wing lawmakers denounce Mr. Beilin for his

willingness to surrender what they consider Israeli land.

"His words sound a lot more like ones that a deputy minister of an Arab country would say," Eliezer Zandberg said in a recent debate. "I call on the prime minister to fire him to clarify that Yossi Beilin's statements don't reflect the policies of his government."

Mr. Beilin, whose dovish views grew out of his experiences as a soldier in the 1967 and 1973 wars, foresees a regional economic "boom" as Arabs and Israelis reduce military expenditures.

Peace will mean a common network of roads, power grids, telecommunications that could be the "seed of a future economic confederation," Mr. Beilin said.

He added, however, that a Middle East common market is unlikely for 20 to 30 years, and "I don't believe our economic future is with the Arab states, especially if they don't want it."

When peace is achieved, Mr. Beilin predicted, Israel will be "a kind of a Nordic country that is dealing with international conflicts and taking part in peacekeeping forces, and is contributing from its own experience to solving others' conflicts."

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 77111-19

PROGRAMME TWO
17:30 Le Chateau Des Oliviers
19:00 News in French
19:15 Le Cirque Mondial
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 The Respected Family
21:10 Man And Machine
22:00 News in English
22:30 The Cape Rebel
23:10 Night Court

PRAYER TIMES

06:00 Fajr
06:30 (Sunrise) Dhuhr
11:48 Asr
17:06 Maghrib
18:26 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swetlith, Tel. (0740)
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 627440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Teresian Church Tel. 623246
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 639511, Tel. 625435

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

Armenian International Church Tel. 625226

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624328

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 684195

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

It will be cloudy to partly cloudy with a chance of scattered showers, and winds will be westerly moderate. In Aqaba, it will be partly cloudy with a chance of scattered showers. Winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Amman 4 / 10
Aqaba 8 / 18
Deserts 4 / 11
Jordan Valley 10 / 16

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 10, Aqaba 19. Humidity readings:

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Amman 92 per cent. Aqaba 38 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Mubtades Mazarah 820425
Dr. Hanna Mansour 750197
Dr. Nasser Ibrahim 710309
Dr. Nidal Al Mahari 751672
Ferdous pharmacy 661912
703336
Al Asma pharmacy 637055
Nairookh pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shamoun pharmacy 637660
Nairookh pharmacy 623672
Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Ahmad Mami (—)
Alqada pharmacy (—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Yousef Abu Sa'd 989000
Khalif pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777

Fire Brigade 891228

Blood Bank 75121

Highway Police 843402

Traffic Police 896390

Public Security Department 630321

Hotel Complaints 605800

Police arrest youth in slaying of 75-year-old

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A 75-year-old man was found brutally murdered with an axe and badly burnt in his small shop Sunday in the Armenian quarter of Jabal Al Ashrafieh, police reports and family sources said.

A 19-year-old man who was not identified by police was arrested in connection with the murder of Salem Batarseh, police reports show.

A close relative of the victim told the Jordan Times that Mr. Batarseh was in his shop when he was attacked. The suspect arrested by police confessed to killing the elderly man, according to police reports. He told police he went to the man's shop and struck him with an axe, poured some gasoline on him and threw a lit match on the body.

The suspect said he placed a gas stove on the man's body, locked the shop door with wire and left the crime scene.

Police reports gave no motive for the crime, but another of the victim's neighbours told the Jordan Times that the old man usually slept in a small room beside his shop and would leave his money under his pillow.

"The suspect was known to be a drug addict and a troublemaker and had been arrested by police several times," the neighbour said. "It seems that he needed some money to buy some drugs and went to the old man, but when the old man refused his request he decided to kill him," added the neighbour.

Police were alerted before discovering the body that a youth had assaulted an elderly man in the area. The person who placed the report with the authorities turned out to be the arrested suspect's father.

According to neighbours, the father had no knowledge of the murder, but simply thought that his son had hurt Mr. Batarseh.

Another neighbour, who was present when police and Civil Defence officers arrived on the scene, expressed sorrow at Mr. Batarseh's death saying the victim was a peaceful man. "Abu Youssef (the victim) was a kind man and a helpful neighbour to everyone," the neighbour told the Jordan Times.

The neighbour said the suspect had been living in the neighbourhood for seven years and was known for his heavy drinking and association with delinquents.

According to neighbours, when people started shouting after discovering the murder, the suspect went to see what was happening.

"When Civil Defence officials arrived the suspect looked out from his balcony and started asking what was wrong and if the old man was dead at the same time," a neighbour said.

The neighbour told the Jordan Times it would have been very difficult for police to determine the identity of the killer had the suspect's father not earlier reported an assault on Mr. Batarseh to police.

The suspect's family left the neighbourhood after he was arrested and no one knows their whereabouts, said the neighbour.

Jordan to hold cargo transport talks with Iraq

Drop in Iraqi imports to Aqaba is a topic of concern

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Transport Minister Aqel Halasa headed for Baghdad Monday for high-level talks with Iraqi officials on issues related to the flow of Iraq-bound cargo through Jordan and the operations of a joint transport company.

Mr. Halasa and his Iraqi counterpart Ahmad Mortada would co-chair the annual board meeting of the Iraqi-Jordanian Land Transport Company (IJLTC) and review the company's 1993 operations and draw up plans for the next year.

The meeting will also finalise the 1993 report and annual

accounts of the company, owned by the Jordanian and Iraqi governments, officials said. No details of the company's financial status were immediately available.

However, the officials said, the company's operations have been adversely affected by the continuing international sanctions against Iraq. Before the sanctions were imposed in August 1990, following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, the company largely depended on transporting Iraq-bound cargo unloaded at Aqaba to Iraq.

The company, continued to survive after the imposition of the sanctions on Iraqi imports of food and medicine exempt from the sanctions, but the

overall volume of such cargo has decreased gradually, with Iraqi government agencies as well as private sector merchants turning to Iranian, Lebanese and Turkish ports for their imports to avert the costly delays incurred while importing through Aqaba.

The delays and higher freight charges are caused as a result of what importers describe as overzealous enforcement of the sanctions by inspectors aboard warships patrolling the Red Sea.

During his talks in Baghdad, Mr. Halasa, who is accompanied by the Jordanian board members of the IJLTC and senior company officials, is

also expected to raise Jordan's concerns over further decline of Iraqi imports through Aqaba following the reopening of Iraq's Gulf port of Umm Qasr in November, the officials said.

While on a visit to Amman in late November, a senior Iraqi transport ministry official was reported to have assured Jordan that there was "a political decision" not to let the reopening of Umm Qasr affect Iraq's imports through Aqaba.

But a campaign launched in Baghdad to encourage private sector importers to use Umm Qasr through incentives such as free fuel and bunkering, and guidelines given to shippers to use small-size vessels suitable

to the Gulf port's capabilities have fuelled Jordanian concerns.

In one case, the Australian Wheat Board was requested to use two 25,000-tonne ships to carry 50,000 tonnes of wheat to Iraq instead of one 50,000-tonne vessel. Umm Qasr can only handle vessels up to a 25,000-tonne capacity.

Jordanian shipping agents however, expect a minimum level of Iraq-bound cargo to pass through Aqaba.

"Umm Qasr is suitable for Iraqi imports from the Far East," said a shipping agent. "But volume of Iraqi purchase from the Far East is not much anyway. The bulk of Iraqi im-

ports is from Europe, and this has to come through Aqaba."

Furthermore, said the agent, many shipowners are reluctant to send their vessels to Umm Qasr because most international insurance companies either refuse to extend coverage to the vessel or demand high premiums.

Umm Qasr lies in an area where the threat of mines planted during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war as well as the war over Kuwait remains high.

The Jordanian Shipping Agents Association (JSAA) has called on the government to cooperate with the shipping sector to devise a package of incentives to attract shipping lines to use Aqaba.

Canadian business mission heads for W. Bank, Gaza

By Ian Atalla
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Canada-Arab Business Council's (CABC) business mission to the Middle East, comprised of representatives of 80 Canadian companies, concluded its visit to Jordan Monday and left for the West Bank and Gaza Strip to complete the last leg of a tour of the region which included Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Syria.

The CABC's stated objective is to promote Canadian exports to Arab countries and to encourage Arab investment in Canada. The mission's visit to Jordan included a round of meetings and discussions with

officials of the Ministry of Industry and Trade, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, the Amman Chamber of Commerce, the Jordanian Businessmen's Association and the Jordan Electricity Authority, as well as a group of Jordanian bankers.

Maher Abu Guendia, the Canadian embassy's commercial attaché, characterised the talks as "positive meetings," adding that "Canada can make a major contribution to Jordan's development in the fields of construction, transportation, telecommunications and power generation."

"We can also aid Jordan in its efforts to advance in the environmental sector as well,

such as in the areas of sewage treatment and water purification."

The current level of trade between the two countries is scanty, both according to statistics and experts, such as Canada's ambassador to Jordan, Andrew Robinson, and Marwan Awad, secretary general of the Ministry of Industry and Trade.

Canada's exports to Jordan, as of late, have averaged a total of only \$7 million to \$10 million annually.

"This is a very small amount for a country of our size, with 26 million people," said Mr. Abu Guendia. Mohammad Asfour, presi-

dent of the Amman Chamber of Commerce, pointed out in the visiting trade mission that such trade that does exist between the two countries is heavily tilted in Canada's favour, and that additional efforts were needed to increase the level of Jordanian exports to Canada.

Jordan's current level of exports to Canada amounts to a mere average of \$0.5 million per year.

"Canada welcomes any Jordanian efforts to export products of interest to its markets — we have no restrictions and welcome their involvement," said Mr. Abu Guendia. "But it is up to Jordanian business people to come and

find and open up markets for themselves."

He noted that the main hindrance to trade between the two countries lay in "natural barriers" — the long distances between the two nations and the ensuing travel and transport expenses.

John Schioler, director general of the CABC and the business mission's manager, said: "We've been very heartened by the response we've seen here in Jordan."

Mr. Abu Guendia and Mr. Schioler both declined to predict what Canada's role might be in the economic development of a future Palestinian self-governing entity, but Mr.

Schioler emphasised that "we are optimistic about what our business people might be able to achieve in the West Bank and Gaza."

"There are many opportunities which could benefit both us and the Palestinians, and we feel that it is a good time to be here," now that there is hope for a peace agreement in the region.

The mission officially concludes its tour of Palestine on Thursday and then returns to Canada. The Jordan-Canada Business Council, the branch of the CABC which is based in Jordan, will send a delegation of Jordanian business persons to visit Canada in May.

Ministry ends problem of street beggars

AMMAN (Petra) — The problem of street beggars has now ended in Jordan because of the efforts of the Ministry of Social Development in cooperation with the concerned police departments, according to minister Mohammad Sqour.

The minister said most of the beggars have been taken off the streets, and many of them did not really have to resort to begging to earn a living.

Some of the beggars are now offered training at vocational centres, and police departments have orders to apprehend those who revert to begging, said Dr. Sqour.

The minister said some of the people who used to pose as beggars turned out to be well-off, and they have been apprehended and their cases referred to court.

Dr. Sqour, who was speaking at a meeting of the Planning Committee at the ministry, noted that the number of

handicapped persons including those with severe disabilities are on the increase.

In order to deal with part of this problem, it is incumbent on the private and public sectors to cooperate, said Dr. Sqour.

For its part, Dr. Sqour said, the ministry is arranging to absorb greater numbers of handicapped persons for rehabilitation at its centres in Jerash and Karak and plans to set up three new centres in Amman and Salt.

He said that this is an initial step towards larger projects which require huge sums of money to provide the centres and recruit and train qualified personnel to operate them.

The minister issued a special appeal to the wealthy people of Jordan to extend a helping hand to the ministry and the voluntary organisations caring for handicapped persons.

450 tonnes of imported meat destroyed, returned in '93

AMMAN (Petra) — Of more than 11,000 tonnes of fresh meat imported by Jordan in 1993, 450 tonnes have either been destroyed or returned to their sources as they failed to meet specifications, according to Mustafa Khleifat, Ministry of Supply secretary general.

In the past year, Jordan imported, 8,300 tonnes of lamb meat and 3,323 tonnes of beef from European countries, said Mr. Khleifat at a meeting with food and meat importers to discuss arrangements for sufficient food supplies during the

coming holy month of Ramadan.

Mr. Khleifat said that 23 per cent of the total imports of lamb meat arrived by plane from Russia, and other amounts came from Romania, Bulgaria and Macedonia.

He said the beef was imported mostly from the Netherlands, Belgium and France, noting that all imports normally undergo strict examination at the Amman Municipality slaughterhouse.

Every year, the Ministry of Supply takes extra measures to

ensure sufficient food supplies, especially of meat, during Ramadan, said Mr. Khleifat.

He said it is hoped that private sector importers would take care to meet local market food supply and that such foods meet Ministry of Supply specifications.

Spokesmen for the merchants at the meeting stressed that they would continue providing the local markets with their needs of meat and live sheep.

Number of political parties grows

By Mariam M. Shahin
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Despite moves by some political parties in Jordan to form mergers in order to consolidate popular support, the number of political groups aspiring to acquire official licensing as parties continues to grow more than one year after political parties became legal in the Kingdom.

January witnessed the licensing of Jordan's 21st political party, the National Action Front (NAF). NAF joins the Jordan Socialist Baath Party, the Progressive Arab Baath Party and the Jordan Arab Democracy Party, as a political grouping in the pan-Arab stream of parties.

Composed of members of pan-Arab parties close to Syria, the secretary general of NAF is independent pan-Arabist and lawyer Saleem Sweiss. NAF groups several well-known political

personalities who were among the most notorious political revolutionaries of the 1970's. They include people like Naji Alloush, a former member of the Palestinian party Fateh, who broke away from the Yasser Arafat-led groups to join the Sahri Al Banna-led group known as the Abu Nidal group.

NAF also includes Brick Hadid, a former Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine adherent who became a leading member of a revolutionary popular party which advocated the overthrow of several Arab governments including the one in Jordan.

Other well-known politicians such as Mohammad Zoubi, Tarek Kayali and Hani Dahleh all followed the Syrian-led Baath party at some stage in their political development.

The group has an unknown number of followers.

22nd party

But that there are already four licensed parties on the pan-Arab spectrum has not stopped another would-be party from applying for licensing. The Constitutional Front (CF), led by former pan-Arab Baathist, also close to the Baath party, in Syria, lawyer Milhem Tell, hopes to attain the slot for Jordan's 22nd political party. CF will be similar to NAF, with the exception that it is almost exclusively made up of former adherents to the Syrian Baath party.

Milhem Tell unsuccessfully ran for a Muslim seat in Amman's Third District in the 1989 legislative elections. During his campaign Mr. Tell openly advocated Jordan's union with Syria.

The only parties that have officially considered merging are the Jordanian Democratic Popular Unity Party and the Jordan People's Democratic Party, two left-wing parties with Palestinian roots.



Minister of Labour Khaled Ghazawi (centre) workshop on labour and population relative to food and nutrition (Petra photo)

Workshop focuses on labour, population and food security

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Agriculture has been instrumental in current attempts by Jordan to attain and ensure food security which is one of the most essential elements of the country's economic and national independence, according to Minister of Labour Khaled Ghazawi.

Addressing the opening session of a five-day workshop on linking labour and population to food production and nutrition, the minister said the incessant endeavours of the Kingdom have helped Jordanians attain higher standards in food and nutrition, health services and education.

Stressing that enormous efforts are still needed to help Jordan attain self-reliance, Mr. Ghazawi said there was urgent need to link population growth to the requirements of life which include health, education, vocational training, and employment.

Organised by the Ministry of Agriculture in cooperation

with the National Population Commission and the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) office in Amman, the workshop is attended by 50 participants representing ministries and organisations concerned with population issues and food and nutrition.

A ministry official said the workshop was needed to train guides and employees from the local communities to work towards solving population and nutrition issues and spread public awareness on matters related to them and connected with socio-economic development plans in the Kingdom.

Mr. Ghazawi said that developing countries produce nearly 49 per cent of the total amount of food required to feed their populations which account for 74 per cent of the total world population.

Referring to the situation in the Arab World, the minister said that Arab spent \$3.3 billion on food imports in 1971 and \$30 billion in 1992, figures

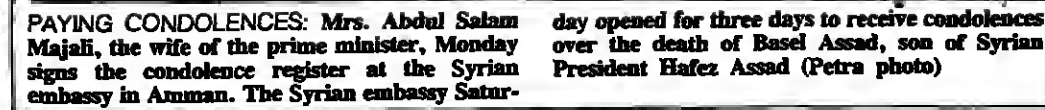
which, he said, demonstrate the ever-widening gap between population growth and food production.

Khaloud Subeithi of the Ministry of Agriculture said the workshop was closely connected to questions related to population growth and basic human needs as compared to the locally-produced materials and food stuffs.

He said the five-day meeting will review topics and working papers related to population trends, changes in rural communities, food production policies, concepts on nutrition, adverse consequences of excessive population growth and other subjects.

The 50 participants, he added, will make field trips to various related institutions.

The meeting, taking place at the Professional Association Complex in Amman is being attended by agricultural engineers and university profes-



PAYING CONDOLENCES: Mrs. Abdul Salam Majali, the wife of the prime minister, Monday signs the condolence register at the Syrian embassy in Amman. The Syrian embassy Saturday opened for three days to receive condolences over the death of Basil Assad, son of Syrian President Hafez Assad (Petra photo)

SSC calls for reduction of job injuries

AMMAN (Petra) — The Social Security Corporation (SSC) Monday issued an appeal to factory owners, employers and official organisations to take appropriate measures to reduce the number of occupational injuries in the workplace.

Corporation Director General Mohammad Saleh Hourani said, nearly 1,000 occupational injuries are reported to his office monthly and the SSC has to bear the consequences of providing compensation to and arranging the treatment of affected workers.

Noting that most work-related injuries occur among the young, Mr. Hourani said that some injuries are fatal and resulting in families and children of injury victims left to support themselves.

Other injuries permanently disable some workers who, thus, are unable to return to their jobs, added Mr. Hourani.

He said occupational safety precaution programmes are continually given through the Workers Occupational Safety Institute.

This year, he said, the SSC plans to execute special integrated programmes to educate those concerned on ways to protect workers from injuries, including films.

The SSC is cooperating with the Ministry of Labour and

several organisations in conducting surveys on the main causes of accidents and occupational injuries and how to deal with them, said Mr. Hourani.

It has also been agreed with the minister of labour that joint inspection teams intensify their visits to factories to ensure that workers are being advised on proper safety precautions.

EMBASSY OF INDIA, AMMAN

Republic Day of India

On the occasion of the Republic Day of India, a flag hoisting ceremony will be held on Wednesday, January 26, 1994 at 10 a.m. at the premises of the embassy of India, First Circle, Jabal Amman (Opp. Malhas Hospital).

All Indians with their family members are cordially invited to attend the function.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Art exhibition by Syrian artist Yasser Hammond at Baladina Art Gallery (Wasfi Al Tal Street).
- ★ Exhibition by Lebanese artist Hussein Madi at Darat Al Funn of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation. Also showing the "permanent" exhibition of 54 Arab contemporary artists. (Tel. 643251/2)
- ★ Art exhibition by artist Raja' Abu Ghazaleh and Mohammad Al Jalous at the Jordan Writers Association.
- ★ Art exhibition by artist Makram Khaghandoouh at the Spanish Cultural Centre.
- ★ Art exhibition by artist Omar Al Basoul at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition on the art of architecture at the French Cultural Centre.
- ★ Art exhibition by several Iraqi and Jordanian artists at Orfali Art Gallery (Tel. 826932).

LECTURES AND DIALOGUES

- ★ Lecture in English entitled "The History of Arab Silver Jewellery" by Mr. Hameed Sadeq Berando at the Goethe-Institut at 6:00 p.m.
- ★ Dialogue with artist Hussein Madi at Darat Al Funn of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Lweidieh at 6:00 p.m.
- ★ Dialogue with writer Mahmoud Al Rimawi on drama at the Phoenix Gallery for Culture and Art at 7:00 p.m.
- ★ Lecture on heritage and democracy by Dr. Sahban Khleifat at the Arab Thought Forum at 6:00 p.m.

DRAMA & FILM

- ★ Drama in Arabic entitled "The Question" at the Royal Cultural Centre (11:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.).
- ★ Film in Russian entitled "Message From A Dead Man" at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Amman at 6:30 p.m.

Jordan Times

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Fresh start, fresh hope

PEACE TALKS between Israel and the Arab sides resumed Monday amidst fresh reports about probable breakthroughs on almost all fronts. In a television interview Sunday, His Majesty King Hussein expressed optimism about the prospects for peace in the region and said that peace may indeed materialise by the end of the year or at the beginning of the next year. This is not a very long time given the complexity of the issues that the two sides need to resolve after decades-long of hostilities and their consequences on the people.

The Washington peace negotiations were this time convened away from limelight, something that augurs well for achieving meaningful results since effective peace parleys need not be held in public.

Meanwhile, the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations on the implementation of the Gaza-Jericho agreement have also resumed in Taba amidst renewed euphoria about bridging the gaps between the two sides on the remaining critical issues dividing them. Although talks on security issues were postponed for a week, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres was quoted Sunday as saying that he and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat are "pretty close" to sealing an agreement on the principle points of contention, especially on border control and the size of the Jericho area that Israel was expected to relinquish to the Palestinians more than a month ago.

Still much more hopes are being pinned on the Syrian-Israeli track of the bilateral talks suspended since last September in the wake of the seemingly fruitful Clinton-Assad summit held in Geneva on Jan. 16. Damascus' readiness to establish "normal peaceful relations" with Tel Aviv in return for full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights is generally viewed as the key that may unlock the deadlock between the two parties.

Therefore, a positive note is now set for a new and good restart for peace talks in the region. As King Hussein summed up the situation Sunday, the alternative to registering real advancement in the Arab-Israeli peace talks is simply catastrophic to the peoples of the area as well as to the international community. Much efforts were already invested in the peace process and there appears to be no turning back on it even though there still exists a sizeable opposition to the process in both sides. The modest peace culture already attained can indeed be expected to mushroom to new heights during the course of this year.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

COMMENTING ON an announcement by the Arab League secretary general that the Arab League foreign ministers are planning to discuss the question of the Arab boycott of Israel, Al Ra'i daily said not a single Arab party would dare end boycott regulations. It would be a real shame for the Arabs to end their boycott of Israel which occupies Arab land and maintain their boycott and siege of the Iraqi people, said the paper. Following his tour of Arab countries, the U.S. Commerce Secretary, Ron Brown, announced that some Arab states were ready to lift the boycott of Israel, but it is up to the Arab League to decide on this matter, said the paper. It is regrettable to say that the Americans might have their way and end the boycott in the coming Arab League meeting, before any peace with the Arabs has been concluded, said the daily. The mere holding of the Madrid conference and the continuation of the peace negotiations with Israel does not, in any way, justify the lifting of the boycott on Israel, nor the normalisation of relations with the Jewish state, stressed the paper. Should the boycott be lifted, said the paper, it would be a great humiliation to the Arabs, even though the move would be traded for the lifting of the sanctions on the Iraqi people. On the whole, said the paper, the lifting of the boycott regulations on Israel which occupied Arab land is a dastardly crime to be committed by the Arab and Islamic countries.

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i daily tackled the controversy surrounding the health minister's accusations levelled at the authorities in charge of the distribution of foodstuff and medicine in the country. Lauding the health minister's brave stand, Tareq Masarweh said that he has been able to point to the excesses and the corruption practices by what the minister called the sharks who tamper with the public's food and medicine. Backing the minister's accusations, the writer cited a number of instances in which a number of people have either died or had food poisoning due to adulterated food and medicine. The writer said that the prime minister is called upon to open an immediate investigation into these acts of corruption. The writer described the minister's statements as a bomb that exploded in order to expose those behind the corruption that has been rampant at the public administration level. He said that the country abounds with sharks who have the power to change laboratory reports about the condition of food and medicine and who can impose exorbitant prices for the drugs and escape paying any income tax. The writer also said that corruption is prevailing in the private sector, especially the banks which charges more than 17 per cent interest and some of whose employees share commissions with clients. The writer said that the health minister's accusations are a healthy sign, and the government should respond to the demands for uprooting corruption in the country.

Replacing the nuclear umbrella with wisdom and responsibility

By Paul H. Nitze

WASHINGTON — Just as the recent NATO summit meeting was a reminder that the world faces a future in which the United States has become the sole global power, it likewise signals that it is time to re-examine the role and place of strategic nuclear weapons in American security policy.

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the division of its nuclear forces, the concerns of U.S. strategic planning have shifted from a single nuclear threat to a complex international situation — from Iraq to Ukraine to North Korea — where regional aggression is more likely than it has been since before World War II.

Experience, including the Gulf war, teaches us that nuclear weapons are unlikely to be useful in deterring aggression in these circumstances. Rather than rely on them, therefore, the United States should consider what might seem at first glance a step backward: converting its principal strategic deterrent from nuclear weapons to a more credible deterrence based at least in part upon "smart" conventional weapons. It is a shift that could be justified as a coldly rational approach to a new security strategy and equally so as a morally correct foreign policy choice.

The case for choosing strategic, high-precision conventional weapons over strategic nuclear weapons is clear. They are safer, cause less collateral damage and pose less threat of escalation than do nuclear weapons. Thus they offer far greater flexibility in a variety of situations where use of any sort of nuclear weapon would be politically or militarily impractical.

The principal challenges to reliance on strategic conventional weapons are also clear. Can they adequately carry out their combat missions? If so, will that fact deter aggression as effectively as nuclear weapons appear to have done? I believe the answers to these questions are, in general, positive.

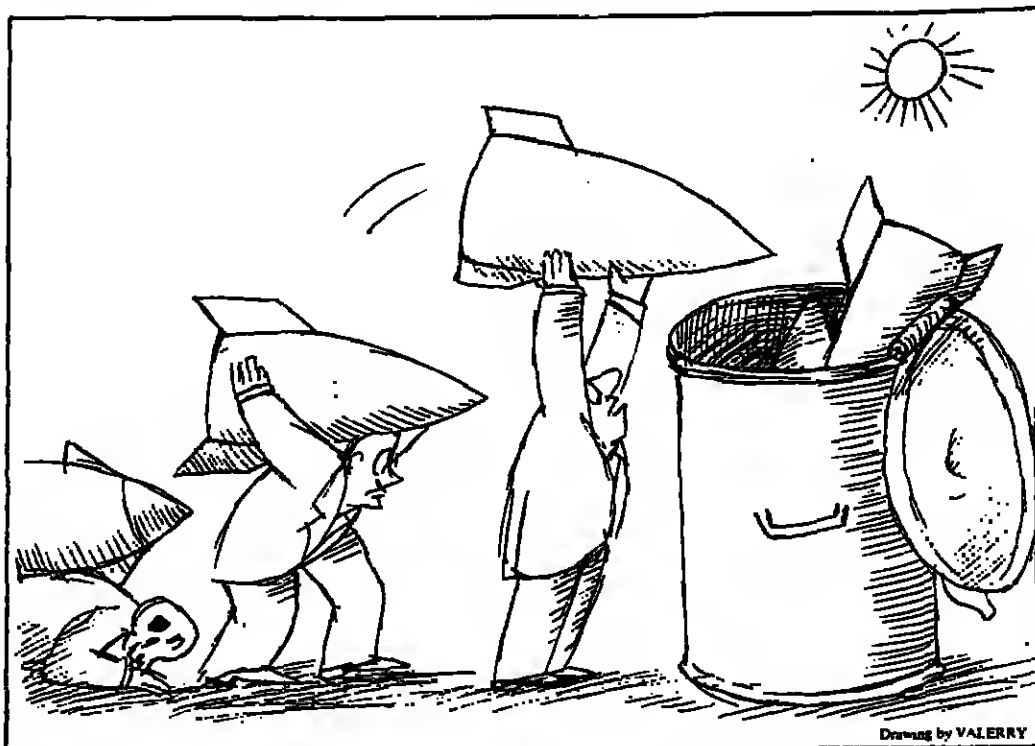
The Gulf war offered a spectacular demonstration of the potential effectiveness of smart weapons used in a strategic role. Against Iraq, such weapons rapidly rendered useless the military forces of a powerful dictator, in particular by neutralising his command, control and communications facilities. At the same time, the Gulf war showed the limited value of nuclear weapons in deterring aggression.

I would argue that there was no useful role for nuclear weapons for anyone in the Gulf war. Iraq could and did simply ignore allied nuclear weapons as virtually chimerical, even when it attacked Israel. Likewise, Iraq would have gained little by employing a nuclear device. For him to have used such a nuclear capability as he might have developed would merely have reinforced the determination of the major powers to eliminate it.

It is also true that a nuclear capability in Saddam Hussein's hands might have undermined U.S. efforts to force him to behave responsibly. Nuclear weapons used in desperation, or in a wild plan of revenge against Israel, could have resulted in great human tragedy. We cannot know whether or not Saddam Hussein would have used nuclear weapons had he possessed them. But we also cannot know whether the

conversion will take place. But first, the truth about smart weapons must be established. Even though advanced conventional weapons appear to have performed well in combat, we must be careful as we evaluate how good a model the Gulf war provided for understanding the future utility of such weapons as a deterrent.

To much of the world viewing the Gulf war on television, smart weapons appeared a miracle weapon, capable of



Drawing by VALERY

allied nuclear threat could ever be counted upon to deter him from using them.

After all, Saddam Hussein chose to start a nuclear weapons programme in the face of the overwhelming nuclear power of the states arrayed against him, including the Israelis he sought to provoke. There was no logical reason for Iraq to build a nuclear weapon outside of this threat of irresponsible behaviour: the looming threat of a wild-card, regional nuclear power. To my mind, Saddam Hussein's decision to embark on a nuclear programme itself shows that there was no nuclear deterrent at play in Iraq's evaluation of the strategic situation in the Gulf.

After the Gulf war, as its lessons are digested by all nations, one message rings loudest: The United States, when provoked, can and will use strategic conventional weapons against whatever targets it considers appropriate.

Understanding this lesson may offer us a way to create the first credible and therefore useful strategic deterrent we have seen since the early days of the nuclear era. It may be that conventional strategic weapons will one day perform their primary mission of deterring immeasurably better than nuclear weapons if only because we can — and will — use them.

It is vitally important that we understand the effectiveness and limitations of strategic conventional weapons. Unfortunately, much public and professional discussion has been superficial. Yet it is a highly encouraging development for America that, for the first time, it might reasonably contemplate making nuclear weapons largely obsolete for the most practical and fundamental strategic missions.

The U.S. government should consciously decide to pursue the conversion of its strategic deterrent from nuclear to conventional weapons; and to begin now to decide not whether, but in what manner, this conversion will take place.

But first, the truth about smart weapons must be established. Even though advanced conventional weapons appear to have performed well in combat, we must be careful as we evaluate how good a model the Gulf war provided for understanding the future utility of such weapons as a deterrent.

To much of the world viewing the Gulf war on television, smart weapons appeared a miracle weapon, capable of

doing the job with little loss of military personnel and limited civilian losses. But this may be an unreasonable perception at the current stage of strategic conventional weapons development.

The lessons of the military utility of nuclear weapons must also be reexamined and frankly acknowledged. We will never be certain what has deterred the use of nuclear weapons since 1945. We can speculate that the strategic nuclear arsenals in their morbid way did stay the use of these weapons, that mutually assured destruction may have prevented the use of nuclear weapons against other nuclear powers. But in truth, using nuclear weapons has never entirely been ruled out, and much of the debate of operational nuclear strategy during the cold war reflected this reality.

What inhibited the American use of nuclear weapons was clearly sensitivity to the implications of the destructiveness of such weapons. And however much U.S. military doctrine asserted otherwise, their use was never an easy option to the United States, and some troublesome government have known this and exploited it as a weakness in U.S. military posture.

While the McNamara-era decision to move towards flexible response certainly led to a more credible U.S. military presence and deterrence for some situations, it did not improve the strategic deterrent. The United States was left with an enormous investment in a nuclear arsenal of limited use except in possibly deterring a nuclear attack by the Soviet Union directly against the United States. It was a one-use strategic deterrent.

Developing true strategic conventional weapons offers a flexible capability that no aggressor can discount safely in a wide range of circumstances. Certainly, it would be wise to continue to maintain a secure and widely dispersed array of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems until it seems certain that the nuclear weapons of others constitute no threat to the United States and its associates. But possession of such nuclear strategic superiority does not, by itself, answer whether it would be wise for the United States actually to use its nuclear forces even in retaliation to the use of nuclear weapons by another country. After all, if the country initiating such use could be effectively disarmed by conventional forces, there

already decaying through shoddy workmanship or lack of maintenance, are surrounded by smaller collective housing units that have sprouted up in all directions in the midst of unfinished construction sites.

Despite the lashing rain, groups of "hitites" chat and laugh, "hit" is "wall" in Arabic, and the "hitites" are boys and young men without work who spend their days outdoors, leaning against the walls of their buildings to escape cramped flats where on average seven people share a single room.

They are not hostile to a stranger's presence, but neither are they overtly welcoming. Journalists in particular provoke suspicion: there is a fear that the police could use reporters as guides.

Qued Samar is another cluster of run-down buildings and muddy streets. An outsider whose car gets stuck is immediately assisted by the "hitites" — and promptly given directions for getting out of the labyrinth.

would be no military reason to retaliate with a nuclear strike. But how close is the United States to possessing conventional weapons that can indeed replace nuclear weapons as the primary deterrent against aggression?

Today, there remains a gap between the destructive power of a first-class strategic arsenal, such as that of Russia, and the ability of American strategic conventional weapons to overcome such a threat. Understanding and overcoming this gap should become the focus of technological research into the practical obstacles of delivery, accuracy and explosive capabilities, as well as planning security strategy and tactics.

The Gulf war suggests that U.S. conventional weapons could offer an adequate deterrent against regional aggression. A question remains whether other powers, such as China and Russia, have come to this conclusion. But the present threat does not come primarily from these nations but from states such as Iraq, North Korea or even Libya. It is, unfortunately, not clear that any strategic weapon can deter the ambitions of a tyrant.

The United States should recognise its responsibility to help shape the pattern and purpose of security arrangements worldwide.

The idea that the future peace and well-being of the world should rest upon the threat of nuclear annihilation of large numbers of non-combatants is, in the long run, unacceptable. We should treat with scorn those, like North Korea, who may attempt to blackmail others with imprudent nuclear threats.

In the world as it is, America will continue to need non-strategic conventional forces to stop aggression as it unfolds. It will also need to maintain an overwhelming nuclear strategic capability, though not necessarily to use such weapons — even in retaliation — if an aggressor can be disarmed with smart non-nuclear strategic weapons. The United States must learn not merely to react, but with wisdom and a sense of the great responsibility that comes with great power.

The writer, a former arms control negotiator and ambassador-at-large during the Reagan administration, is diplomat-in-residence at the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University. The article is reprinted from The Washington Post.

No more concessions at negotiations

By Pascal B. Karmy

The PLO and Israel have been involved for the last several weeks in marathon negotiations in order to find an agreement to implement the Oslo Accord of 13 September. It is my belief that the PLO should remain steadfast in its discussions and must not yield under the pressure to achieve a quick agreement. Only an agreement acceptable in its terms to the Palestinians and in particular those of the occupied territories can be implemented on the ground. Any agreement reached must be pragmatic and workable. It will be useless otherwise. In my opinion, Israel is more in need of concluding an agreement with the Palestinians than the latter need it.

The intifada has drained Israel of its energy to continue with the occupation and brought it to the negotiating table with the Palestinians. Israel stands to benefit a lot after normalising its relations with its neighbours. Once an overall agreement is reached, all the doors of recognition and trade will be opened by the countries who have not so far recognised the existence of the state of Israel or have severed diplomatic relations with it. Furthermore, Israel will be able to penetrate and try to dominate the lucrative multi-billion-dollar Arab market.

Israel simply cannot afford to return to the status-quo ante of the PLO-Israel accord, as the intifada will inevitably continue to intensify and will eventually bring Israel to bow down to the full national demands of the Palestinians. After several weeks of failing to reach an agreement due to Israel's intransigence, many Palestinians feel that the intifada should be intensified to bear more pressure on Israel. We must not forget that it is because of the intifada that Israel has agreed to negotiate on equal par with the Palestinians. The support of those Palestinians who lost hundreds of relatives, suffered thousands of wounded and were imprisoned in six years of daily street battles using nothing but stones against one of the most modern and powerful armies of the world, is the most crucial factor in implementing the accord.

On our side of the fence, we must put our house in order and do it quickly and convincingly. There remain a lot to be done. There is a growing feeling of disappointment and anger among many prominent Palestinians and many members of the PLO Executive Committee for the way the negotiations are being handled. As a result, and due to his autocratic style, the support for Yasser Arafat is dwindling, thus reducing his standing and authority among the Palestinian people and his credibility as a viable state leader. Palestinians must insist on a complete withdrawal of the Israeli army from Gaza and Jericho. Jericho, as mentioned in the accord, should extend its administrative district as was applied during the Jordanian rule and not simply Jericho town. It is indeed regrettable that the definition of "Jericho" was not clearly and unambiguously brought out in the accord. This is one of the many lacunas in the accord which has been formulated.

Mr. Arafat should not dogmatically refuse to enlist the help of some of Palestinian prominent thinkers, administrators and legal experts. Also included should be some Palestinian activists who thoroughly know the territories. The Israelis have a formidable team assigned to this task.

The intifada's colossal achievement brought desperately needed recognition and self-esteem to the Palestinian people at a time they were only known to the outside world as terrorists. The fruits of the intifada must be carefully and intelligently exploited to the fullest.

Now the job of the PLO is to try during the implementation of the accord and thereafter to apply what writer Toufic Abu Bakr has called "the creeping sovereignty" over the occupied territories, including the settlements, to reverse the creeping annexation of the Palestinian territory which has been applied by the Israelis by hook or crook during the twenty-six years of occupation.

So no more concessions should be made to the Jewish state. Palestinians should negotiate from a position of strength and not of weakness as they hold the most important card that is: Their undisputed basic right of self-determination and a national home long sought by the Jews themselves.

On our side of the fence, we must put our house in order and do it quickly and convincingly.

The writer is a former arms control negotiator and ambassador-at-large during the Reagan administration, is diplomat-in-residence at the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University. The article is reprinted from The Washington Post.

Algerian Islamic strongholds less threatening than their reputation

By Christian Millet
Agence France Presse

ALGIERS — Feared by police as hotbeds of Islamic zealotry and violence, the impoverished suburbs and districts of Algiers are squalid urban slums characterised more by dilapidated housing and crippling unemployment than Muslim militancy.

The teeny housing projects to the south and southeast of the capital — Baraki, Eucalyptus, Oued Smar, Oued Ouachia, El Harrach, Glaciere and Badjarah — have been described as "liberated zones" and "Islamic mini-republics."

For law enforcement officers they are no-go districts, except during major search operations mounted by teams of police. For residents of more affluent areas, the projects are

sloister and forbidding, where disappearances are said to be frequent.

The Eucalyptus project's reputation as an "Islamic stronghold" gained currency in late October when three kidnapped staff members at the French consulate were briefly held in the area before being transferred to a neighbouring suburb.

Tens of thousands of people live in Eucalyptus, located 19 kilometres from here. Superficially, the project seems to have little to recommend it, notably at night when garbage-strewn streets become open sewers under torrential rain.

Only the central artery has streetlights — most of which no longer function.

Urban planning appears to have been incoherent at best. Huge buildings 200 to 300 metres long, recently built but

already decaying through shoddy workmanship or lack of maintenance, are surrounded by smaller collective housing units that have sprouted up in all directions in the midst of unfinished construction sites.

Despite the lashing rain, groups of "hitites" chat and laugh, "hit" is "wall" in Arabic, and the "hitites" are boys and young men without work who spend their days outdoors, leaning against the walls of their buildings to escape cramped flats where on average seven people share a single room.

They are not hostile to a stranger's presence, but neither are they overtly welcoming. Journalists in particular provoke suspicion: there is a fear that the police could use reporters as guides.

Qued Samar is another cluster of run-down buildings and muddy streets. An outsider whose car gets stuck is immediately assisted by the "hitites" — and promptly given directions for getting out of the labyrinth.

Contrary to expectation, slogans as "Islamic Salvation Front and the Armed Islamic Group are not in evidence inside the projects themselves. They are reserved for walls closer to commissariats, police stations and barracks located on the outskirts of the "liberated zones."

But for all the infrastructural horrors of their surroundings, project residents have retained their warmth and essential friendliness. They do not live in armed camps or ghettos, and — with the exception of the police — outsiders can come and go in safety.

Azerbaijan army prepares for Karabakh

By Maria Korolov
Reuters

QERVENDE, Azerbaijan — Six months ago Azerbaijan's army suffered defeats so monumental that the president fled the country and a fifth of the Transcaucasian republic ended up in enemy hands.

Critics from all sides castigated the military for gross incompetence in the face of attacks by separatist Armenian forces pushing into the republic from the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The Azeri army is finally starting to pull itself together and has launched a three-pronged offensive to recover captured territories in western Azerbaijan.

Officers and men say President Heydar Aliyev, who took over the country last June after former leader Abulfaz Elchibey fled in the face of rebellious troops, has played a large role in restoring discipline to the army's tattered ranks.

"Aliyev is responsible for bringing career officers back into the army," said a field commander on the Fuzuli front, south of Karabakh. "Before, no one wanted to serve because it was so chaotic. But now, there is a new commitment to the military. We've passed a turning point. A real turning point."

Soldiers and foreign observers in the capital Baku said the signs of improvement included lower desertion rates and more volunteers, higher morale in the ranks and more respect for commanding officers. They also point to a clearly defined chain of command, with ultimate power resting firmly in Mr. Aliyev's hands. "We used to have many commanders, each heading a different fighting group," said one officer.

"When it was politically expedient, any of them could pull all his men back from the front."

Thousands have been killed in the six-year conflict over

Karabakh, an enclave of Azerbaijan populated mainly by Armenians.

Both sides say that hundreds of Armenian soldiers have been killed in the latest battles, although such statements are usually exaggerated.

One indication that the fighting could be heavier than usual was the appearance of dozens of shiny new ambulances which arrived on the southern front last week.

The new commitment to the war effort has already produced results.

The military headquarters of the western front is in the village of Qervend, less than 20 kilometres from the key Azeri town of Agdam.

Agdam is on the border with Karabakh, about 25 kilometres from Stepanakert, the capital of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Armenian forces accused Azerbaijan of launching artillery attacks from Agdam and captured the town last July. If the Azeris take Agdam, then Stepanakert will once again be within reach of their Grad multiple-missile launchers and Azerbaijan will be able to enter ceasefire negotiations from a position of greater strength.

One thing the new Azeri army still lacks, however, is trained officers. In an attempt to overcome the shortage some soldiers were promoted after they demonstrated prowess in action.

Other officers will be forced to give up cushy desk jobs. "The officers gathered here will be sent to the front," Mr. Aliyev told a group of former military bureaucrats in a televised address last week.

"It may be most of the officers here served in recruitment offices and in army units stationed in Baku, but now you should continue your service in military units at the battlefronts."

Newspapers have reported that the general recruitment campaign has been stepped up, increasing the stream of men going to training camps and then to Karabakh.

Regent visits Balqa region

(Continued from page 1)

With reference to public administration, the Regent said: "We can contain and stem all that which mars the society's image, like waste (favouritism) and behavioural corruption, only through ideal behaviour and practice which can truly offer service to the public."

The Regent also visited the King Hussein Bridge on the River Jordan accompanied by a number of ministers and heads of government departments.

The Regent met and chatted with travellers crossing the river from the occupied West Bank, enquiring about their conditions and listening to their remarks about facilities and procedures at the crossing point.

The Prince toured on foot the neighbouring Al Tawal district under heavy rain and met with the local residents. He was welcomed during these visits by notables and parliament members from the Balqa region.

The Regent chaired a meeting at the Salt Community College attended by representatives of political and social organisations as well as parliament members and other notables.

Samples, records 'missing'

(Continued from page 1)

with the situation. "Deputies will (after holding a general discussion with the government) seek to reach an accurate assessment of the situation so as to propose decided remedial solutions," the statement said.

"If the allegations (of the minister) prove true, people's confidence should be referred to court and legal action taken against them in protection of the citizen and his food and medicine security," the statement said.

But if the allegations proved false, the statement said, the government should take the responsibility for shaking the public's confidence in their food and medicine and for hurting the national economy.

It is not yet clear when the special session will be held, but the House regulations stipulate that "a general discussion" with the government be held no later than 10 days after deputies request one.

Over 30 deputies have requested the session.

Israel, Egypt voice optimism

(Continued from page 1)

also said Israel insisted on maintaining control of the road from the border to the checkpoint.

Mr. Peres also suggested Israel agreed to letting the Palestinians build a hotel at the Dead Sea, which would stretch their authority southwards from the town of Jericho.

Mr. Peres said that he and Mr. Arafat had already agreed on "some points" at their meeting last Saturday in Oslo.

"There are other points which are still hanging in the air... I do believe there is a basis for agreement but we have not yet completed the negotiations," he said.

On his return to Cairo, Mr. Musa said his visit aimed at advancing all tracks of the Arab-Israeli peace talks had been "useful."

Mr. Arafat was expected on Tuesday in Egypt.

King Fahd meets PLO chief

(Continued from page 1)

that I hope will be closed," Mr. Arafat said by telephone.

"Together together, we shall pray in Al Aqsa mosque," he said.

"I have many things to say to him," the PLO leader told AP. "I will affirm his responsibility for Al Aqsa and I am, certain that he is capable of shouldering this responsibility."

Saudi Arabia has backed the historic Sept. 13 PLO-Israel accord as long as it becomes the first step towards an overall settlement that would include the return of East Jerusalem.

King Fahd, apparently reflecting continued resentment of the PLO chairman.

Arriving Monday in Riyadh, in a small plane, Mr. Arafat disembarked with arms outstretched and hugged the waiting Prince Salman, witnesses said.

Mr. Arafat is to visit the mosque of the Prophet Muhammad in Medina before leaving Saudi Arabia. He is due to have talks with President Hosni Mubarak in Cairo on Tuesday.

Taba security talks delayed

(Continued from page 1)

"The security committee is postponed until next week," he said, giving no further explanation for the delay.

Gen. Yahia said that Dr. Shaath would not be coming to Taba this week for the discussions, although a separate committee on civilian issues connected to the planned withdrawal started meeting Monday and would continue for two or three days.

Dr. Shaath could not be reached immediately for comment in Cairo.

Israeli in a group negotiating the functions of a Palestinian civil authority, earlier said: "We will discuss today telecommunications — radio, television, telephones and frequencies. We have achieved a lot so far."

The talks in this Egyptian Red Sea resort were to have run until Thursday.

General Yahia, who serves in the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA), said negotiations on security issues depended on the outcome of Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa's talks in Israel on Monday.

Delegation heads meet

(Continued from page 1)

tured and a little less public," a U.S. State Department official said. An Israeli source said no deadline for the talks has been set, though the fasting month of Ramadan begins Feb. 11.

Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) are seeking a compromise formula for control of border crossings, one of the main stumbling-blocks holding up

the establishment of limited Palestinian autonomy.

Mr. Rahinovitch said Israel wanted to hear firsthand from the Syrians following the U.S.-Syria summit in Geneva last week about the extent of normalisation they wanted.

"Even if we have a better idea about the Syrian position on peace, we have yet to hear it, or hear it in detail. There are arrangements," he said.

The law we all must adhere to

By Waleed Sadi

A RECENT criminal court decision in Quebec brought into focus the issue of multiculturalism in Canada. Multiculturalism, it will be remembered, is a critical subject for human rights advocates and Ottawa prides itself on having created a climate of peaceful and fruitful coexistence between the different, and sometimes conflicting, cultures to which many Canadians belong.

In that verdict, a municipal judge gave a light sentence to a man convicted of having sodomised his nine year old step daughter over an extended time because he saved her virginity. The judge took a mistaken judicial notice that in Islam, to which the family belongs, the protection and safeguarding of virginity supercedes all other sexual considerations and the guilty father must be therefore "rewarded" for containing his sexual abuse of the child to sodomy. Needless to say, the verdict stunned and shocked Canadians of all religions and cultures, including Muslims who in fact condemn and punish all forms of illicit sexual contacts with the opposite sex, especially when it comes to minors. Yet, the judge in that case wrongfully thought that she was only advancing the cause of multiculturalism by giving it a new and added meaning that Canadians would welcome.

Of course the court decision was unfortunately wrong on all counts and the fact that multiculturalism was given a new twist in Canada brings to the fore an urgent need for a fresh reappraisal of the notion of multiculturalism per se and

whether it can still be the basis for forging nations even when there is a correct interpretation of what these various cultures stand for, something that was woefully lacking in the Canadian court ruling.

Interestingly enough, a new poll taken in Canada prior to that infamous Quebec court decision revealed that three out of four Canadians do not have much faith in multiculturalism as a basis for state building in their country and would rather opt for the American melting pot experience where the seeds for conflicts based on ethnic, religious or cultural differences are contained as much as possible instead of promoted.

Human Rights File

The lessons to be learned from the Canadian experiment in forging a nation based on many cultures are relevant to many other peoples and countries. The subject is certainly important from the human rights point of view to many countries of the world where different religions and cultures are trying to co-exist in a peaceful and harmonious way. And of course there is a parallel that could be drawn between multiculturalism in Canada and elsewhere and the issue of "peculiar cultural and religious considerations" that many countries from the developing world tried to push forward during last year's Vienna world conference on human rights as a "justification" or "excuse" for the lax implementation of international human rights norms in all states and for all peoples.

It will be remembered that a compromise was struck during the Vienna meeting under which "diversity" between different cultures and religions was given a new and positive robe after the phenomenon was depicted as "enriching" rather than serving as an obstacle to the application of human rights standards fairly and squarely on all societies and peoples. The "universality" of human rights standards had set the tone for that world gathering and ended up diluting the arguments in favour of giving disproportionate considerations to the peculiar religions or cultures that nations and peoples of the world belong to.

One would have thought that the Quebec judge who presided over the trial of the man convicted of repeatedly sodomising a young girl would have taken due notice of this internationally accepted "universal" principle by declaring that in spite of the presumed stand of any religion or culture on any behaviour or conduct, there is still a minimum universal standard that all cultures and religions must adhere to, no matter what. This is in essence what the comity of nations accepted at the Vienna conference and that is exactly what the Canadian court system must be expected to honour as well. The Quebec court decision therefore stands out as an outrageous humiliation of the universality of principle regarding human rights and must be overruled by a higher court in that country. What adds insult to injury is the fact that the decision gave a distorted and damaging picture about Islam. Canada owes it to itself, to Muslims and to the cause of human rights to correct the dangerous precedent created by that Quebec municipal court decision.

Who masterminded bombing the World Trade Centre?

By Jane Hunter

SACRAMENTO CA. — FBI informant Emad Salem was responsible for bombing the World Trade Centre (WTC) last February and even paid for the rented van that carried the bomb into the New York skyscraper, say attorneys for two of the men accused of the bombing.

William Kunstler and Ronald Kuby made these claims in a letter on Dec. 10 to the judge who will try the 14 men arrested last summer on charges of conspiring to bomb a number of New York sites and subsequently charged with conspiracy to bomb the WTC. Mr. Kunstler and Mr. Kuby were writing in response to a prosecution complaint that they were leaking the contents of tape recordings Emad Salem made secretly when he talked on the phone with his FBI handlers.

Mr. Salem, a former Egyptian army colonel with reported links to Egyptian intelligence, earned hundreds of thousands of dollars by taping his contacts with the defendants in the bomb conspiracy, among them the Egyptian cleric Sheikh Abdul Rahman. The accused say Mr. Salem masterminded and organised the bombing conspiracy.

"It has been reported to us," wrote Mr. Kunstler and Mr. Kuby, "that Salem was seen in the vicinity of the WTC on the day of the bombing. Moreover, we have information that he paid for the rental of the truck assumed to be the vehicle which carried the bomb."

"I have been told that someone saw him between the time the bomb went off and he checked into the hospital... several hours after the bombing," Mr. Kuby told Middle East International (MEI). In their letter the two attorneys say they "have learned that Salem entered St. Clare's Hospital some time on the day of the bombing and remained until March 1, 1993... The hospital diagnosis was 'vertigo' stemming from a middle-ear disturbance... first detected when he earlier fired a rifle on the range without ear-plugs."

Mr. Kunstler and Mr. Kuby theorise that Mr. Salem involved himself in the WTC bombing as a way of getting back in the good graces of the FBI, which had dropped him as an informant in summer of 1992. The bureau reinstated him after the WTC blast. In 1991, following the murder in New York of Meir Kahane, Mr. Salem began spying on a group of Muslim immigrants, many of whom attended the sermons of Sheikh Abdul Rahman. He infiltrated the group supporting Sayid Nosair, who was convicted on charges related to the killing and is now among the 14 accused in the conspiracy case.

Leaks everywhere

The issue of leaks is likely to feature prominently at the trial, said Ronald Kuby. In letters to Judge Michael Mukasey, the prosecutor, Assistant U.S. Attorney Andrew McCarthy has asked that the court stop Mr. Kunstler and Mr. Kuby from making their claims. He says their claims are a "ploy" to discredit Mr. Salem and "can have no other purpose but to prejudice the due administration of justice." Mr. Kunstler and Mr. Kuby note in their letter that prosecution leaks had for months "seriously prejudiced" the case against the conspiracy defendants and against the four men now on trial for bombing the WTC. They accused McCarthy of "lashing out at public utterances by counsel that tend to even the playing field."

Just before Christmas the FBI confirmed reports that it had suspended the head of its New York office, James Fox, for discussing the case during a television interview. The sus-

pension was seen as an object lesson, as Fox, one of the bureau's highest-ranking officials, was due to retire in January. But the prosecution does not — cannot — deny that for months on end it was the source of inflammatory leaks about "Islamic terrorism."

It is not clear whether Mr. Salem's apparent implication in the bombing could aid the four defendants in the current WTC case. Unlike the conspiracy defendants, who say they were entrapped by Mr.

Salem, the four men of Arab descent who are now on trial insist they did not bomb the WTC. Defence attorneys have not yet begun to prepare their case, have declined to discuss their strategy — Middle East International.



السلطنة الهاشمية
المملكة الأردنية الهاشمية

HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN I.F.B. NO. APC/39-8-A ADVERTISEMENT FOR THE SUPPLY OF A WORKBOAT

The Arab Potash Company Limited (APC) of Amman, Jordan invites suppliers interested in tendering for the supply of a workboat for the servicing of dredgers employed on removal of the salt reefs & mushrooms to apply for tender documents to APC's head office at the address shown below. The cost for each copy of the tender documents is (JD 40) non-refundable.

Mr. Issa Gammoah
Projects Manager
The Arab Potash Co. Ltd.,
P.O.Box 1470
Amman, Jordan

Fax No.: 962-3-377130/site
: 962-6-674416/Amman H.Q.
Tel. No.: 665116 or 03 - 377121/site
: 666165/6, Amman

Submission of tenders shall be not later than 12:00 noon, March 5th 1994. Tender should be submitted in three (3) copies, one marked original, each submission shall consist of two (2) separate parts, one technical and the other commercial.

Managing Director
The Arab Potash Company Ltd.

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JOE OPPORTUNITIES

The Azraq Oasis Project announces the following job vacancies to work with the sub-project of the Environment Impact Assessment and Implementation of Ramsar Convention.

A) Biodiversity Specialist:
Qualifications and Experience

1. The Minimum qualification should be a university degree (preferably a post graduate degree) in one of the biological science and specialist in classification of flora and/or fauna.
2. A minimum of five years work experience.
3. He or She should have sound reporting skills, and should be proficient in English and Arabic.

B) Socio-economics Specialist:
Qualifications and Experience

1. The minimum qualification should be a university degree in one of the sociology and/or economics, socio-economic planning (preferably post graduate qualifications).
2. A minimum of five years work experience.
3. He or She should have sound reporting skills, and should be proficient in English and Arabic.

Those who meet the above requirements are kindly requested to submit their applications to the project administration located in the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature in Jubaila - Amman.

N.B. Closing day for applications is Thursday 27th of January, 1994. candidates should bring CV and documents.

HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN I.F.B. NO. APC/39-8-B ADVERTISEMENT FOR THE SUPPLY, INSTALLATION AND COMMISSIONING OF HIGH DENSITY POLYETHELENE PIPELINE

The Arab Potash Company Limited (APC) of Amman, Jordan invites supply companies interested in tendering for the supply installation and commissioning of one thousand (1000) metres of 14 inch internal diameter high density polyethylene pipeline, to apply for tender documents to APC's head office at the address shown below. The cost for each copy of the tender documents is JD(30) non-refundable.

Mr. Issa Gammoah
Projects Manager
The Arab Potash Co. Ltd.,
P.O.Box 1470
Amman, Jordan

Fax No.: 962-3-377130/site
: 962-6-674416/Amman H.Q.
Tel. No.: 665116 or 03 377121/site
: 666165/6, Amman

Submission of tenders shall be not later than 12:00 noon March 5th, 1994.

Tender should be submitted in three copies, one marked original and should each consist of two (2) sections, one technical and the other commercial.

Managing Director
Arab Potash Company Ltd.

Jugoslavia unveils new 'super dinar'

CHARGES (R) — The National Bank of Yugoslavia unveiled new "super dinar" banknotes intended to be the cornerstone of an economic recovery plan designed to combat raging hyperinflation.

The new dinar notes, which are backed by gold and hard currency and more freely convertible, will be introduced into circulation Monday.

The new dinar is expected to be the last of its kind, as the country's economy has been devastated by economic sanctions and the cost of supporting a war in neighbouring Bosnia. Inflation soared to an annual rate of one billion per cent in 1993.

The central bank said that the new dinar was needed to replace the old one, which had been removed from circulation since last October and will circulate alongside the old one for an interim period of three months but will be convertible.

The new dinar is expected to be the last of its kind, as the country's economy has been devastated by economic sanctions and the cost of supporting a war in neighbouring Bosnia. Inflation soared to an annual rate of one billion per cent in 1993.

The backbone of the new economic programme is austerity and reduced public spending.

It requires backing by all parties and trade unions, but analysts predict the necessary broad backing will never materialise because the Serbian political scene is deeply split among various opposition groups.

The architect of the economic recovery programme, dragoslav Avramovic, a former World Bank official who has been tipped as the new National Bank chief, said last week: "I hope that we will be successful in by and large stopping the inflation because there will be no printing of the old dinar and whatever is printed of the new dinar will be convertible currency."

"We hope all the stocks (of food and goods) which exist will come to the market fairly quickly and, I hate giving a date, but if there is any sense in these numbers, it should be stabilised fairly quickly," he asserted.

The need for economic stability in Serbia and Montenegro — the remaining republics of the Yugoslav federation — has become increasingly pressing as monthly wages and pensions have shrunk in value to as low as one Deutschmark (60 cents).

In recent weeks, the old dinar has been virtually ignored, with prices in all but poorly stocked state shops expressed in marks, the favoured currency in a country which has sent thousands of "guest workers" to Germany.

The National Bank said it was issuing one, five and 10 dinar notes, together with a new 100 dinar note. One dinar has been divided into 100 paras, a subdivision that existed until 1991, when it was replaced by the new dinar. The new dinar is expected to be the last of its kind, as the country's economy has been devastated by economic sanctions and the cost of supporting a war in neighbouring Bosnia. Inflation soared to an annual rate of one billion per cent in 1993.

Saudi-U.S. venture gets \$13m fiber deal

CHICAGO (R) — A joint venture between a Saudi Arabian company and a U.S. company has won an 800-million-ryyal (about \$13 million) contract to build a new fibre plant in Saudi Arabia, officials said Saturday.

The joint venture, Saudi Arabia Basic Industries Corporation (SABIC) and the Saudi Arabian company, said the Saudi Arabian company has won the contract to build a new fibre plant in Saudi Arabia, officials said Saturday.

polyethylene terephthalate bottle resin.

The Saudi Arabian company is responsible for construction of the new plant, and SABIC has licensed the process technology from Zammer, a SABIC statement said.

SABIC, the Saudi Arabian industrial conglomerate, holds a 51 per cent stake in the new company and other Saudi and Gulf Arab firms own the remaining 49 per cent.

It will be Saudi Arabia's first polyester plant and will be built close to another SABIC affiliate, the Saudi Yanbu Petrochemical Company (Yanbu) which will provide feedstock.

Yanbu is a 50-50 SABIC joint venture with Mobil Yanbu Petrochemical Company Inc., a subsidiary of Mobil Oil Company.

SABIC's Vice-Chairman Ibrahim Bin Abdullah Bin Saleh said the new plant was set up in Yanbu to help get its major feedstocks of ethylene glycol from Yanbu.

Russia seen lurching back to Soviet-style economy

MOSCOW (R) — Russia may lurch back to Soviet-style economic controls under a troika of industrialists who favour central planning, price controls and even a fixed exchange rate, Russian and Western economists warned Monday.

"I fear it'll be like the good old days with lots of slogans about boosting production and the virtues of central planning," said Andrei Illarionov, deputy head of the liberal Government Centre for Economic Reforms.

"The government will print money to pay for increased budget deficits. We will see a soaring budget deficit. Inflation will rise and the rouble will fall," he told Reuters.

"Eventually, the government will be forced to impose price controls and even a fixed exchange rate. We will see the typical elements of a Soviet-style economic system," he pointed out.

Economists painted a picture of gloom after the Government Centre for Economic Analysis reported a jump in inflation to 16.2 per cent in the first 18 days of January from a 15-month low of 12 per cent for

the whole of December.

Mr. Illarionov said the central bank had been instructed by the government to print 17 trillion roubles (\$11.6 billion) in the first quarter of 1994 compared to an initial seven trillion.

The money would be used to fund government spending in the form of higher state subsidies and cheap loans to agriculture.

Banks said January inflation was likely to rise to more than 20 per cent on tax monetary policies, which will inevitably push the rouble further down against the dollar.

The Russian currency fell nearly 25 per cent against the dollar so far this month. Most of the fall was in the last week after reform flagbearers Boris Fyodorov and Yegor Gaidar quit the government.

The Harvard professor who Friday quit as Boris Yeltsin's economic adviser said the head of the IMF should resign for failing to give the Russian president the cash to fend off the election of a reactionary government.

In a New York Times article published in the International

Herald Tribune Monday, Jeffrey Sachs said the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which coordinates aid to Moscow, had "like any long-standing monopoly... grown arrogant, self-protective and sloppy."

The Russian Central Bank says it will support the rouble, but senior Western bankers say it is already debasing bringing in a fixed exchange rate which could produce a flourishing black market.

Economists and bankers expect a spending-minded, conservative cabinet to relax purse strings for industries.

"There is no one left in Russia to pursue radical reforms," said dealer Alexander Chernykh with Credit Moscow Bank.

At the helm of the economy is Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, in charge of the oil and gas industry in Soviet days, and his protégé First Deputy Premier Oleg Soskovets and central bank boss Viktor Geraschenko, economists said.

"Lobbies have taken over the government," Swedish economist Anders Aslund, a

former adviser to Yeltsin's government, told Reuters by telephone.

"These people represent the lobbies of agriculture, energy and the metallurgical complex. They are robbing the people. They want to print as much money as possible because they are making their own living on this," he said. "This is a recipe for financial disaster."

Particularly alarming to Western economists were higher spending plans announced over the weekend by Alexander Zaverukha, a senior minister in charge of agriculture.

Mr. Zaverukha promised a support package for farmers to restrict this year's output fall to no more than six per cent. It could cost up to 14 trillion roubles (\$9.1 billion).

By comparison, the finance ministry's targeted deficit for the whole of last year was 17 trillion roubles (then worth \$14.5 billion) or 10 per cent of gross national product.

"All government policies so far point to higher inflation and budget deficit. There could be a tendency to resort to state controls on prices,"

said a senior Western economist.

Mr. Chernomyrdin last week forecast monthly inflation of eight or nine per cent by the end of 1994, way above a five per cent target agreed with the International Monetary Fund.

But not all was gloom and doom.

"The Russian economy today is controlled by Russian businessmen," said a Western businessman. "There are enough energetic businessmen around to make sure reforms continue."

"Russian businessmen are ruthless. They won't allow the government to stop them getting richer. If government ministers start talking about things like renationalisation, they would be shot by the mafia in days."

Meanwhile, Russia Monday reported a \$14.68 billion trade surplus in 1993, up from \$5.34 billion in 1992, but the figure was far below earlier estimates and Western economists said it could be grossly exaggerated.

Interfax news agency said that 1993 fell by more than \$4 billion to \$31.23 billion while exports rose \$5.3 billion to \$45.91 billion.

But senior Western economists in Moscow said cross-checking with Russian trade partners by the International Monetary Fund showed a trade surplus of about \$5 billion to \$7 billion for 1993. The government had earlier forecast a surplus of \$20 billion.

"The trade surplus for 1993 was grossly exaggerated," said a senior Western economist. "The IMF cross-checked with official statistics provided by Russian trade partners. We're talking about a trade surplus of no more than \$5-7 billion."

The study said Russian 1993 imports could have been as much as \$35 billion.

The economists said import taxes imposed by the government last year encouraged importers not to report transactions, many of which were carried out by private individuals shipping small volumes of consumer goods across poorly controlled frontiers.

Central bank officials also reported a surge in imports late last year that had not been fully reported.

Trade figures did not reflect changes in the rouble-dollar exchange rate.

Chaos accompanies CFA devaluation

ABIDJAN (R) — Devaluation of the CFA franc has brought chaos to Africa's CFA zone where governments have issued contradictory edicts on prices, banks have given wrong rates and labour discontent is on the rise.

The success or failure of the 50 per cent devaluation, which came into effect on Jan. 12, will largely be decided in Ivory Coast, the dominant economy of the 13 mainland African states in the CFA zone.

"The decision to devalue the CFA franc has been taken. Now what we need is a serious team of competent workers capable of managing it," the weekly Le Patriote said. "If the government does not manage this phenomenon, Ivory Coast will descend into chaos, a state into which it is sliding in any case."

Devaluation came four

weeks after a new cabinet was formed following the death of president Felix Houphouët-Boigny, though Prime Minister Daniel Kablan Duncan has retained overall charge of the finance portfolio.

"The key is for the government to sound like they know what they're doing to avoid panic," one economist commented.

The pro-opposition Fesaci labour organisation said Wednesday it would organise a mass meeting of all the country's unions on Jan. 30.

In Cameroon, civil servants are already reeling from a 50 per cent pay cut announced two months ago.

In Benin, eight main union organisations set up a devaluation crisis committee and denounced President Nicéphore Soglo for not taking immediate steps to control the effects.

Teams from the International Monetary Fund and World Bank are doing the rounds of CFA countries to discuss new economic programmes and offer guidance.

Confusion surrounded the amount of the devaluation. The CFA halved in value to be worth 100 to one French franc from 50, a rate it had been fixed at since 1948.

Banks in Yaounde, capital of Cameroon, began by offering 75 CFA to the French franc, however.

Traders were also confused. More confusion came when the Ivorian government on Jan. 12 froze prices of 34 basic items, then two days later raised two of the main essentials, rice and petrol.

Ivory Coast's Commerce Minister Ferdinand Kacou Angora has cancelled three news conferences without ex-

planation.

In Cameroon, the chaos was far worse. On Thursday night, the government cancelled four decrees published the previous day increasing prices of sugar, flour, bread and pharmaceutical products by 63 to 84 per cent.

On Saturday, the government announced a six-month freeze in the prices for flour, bread, sugar, pharmaceutical products, school books and palm oil.

It repealed a decree signed on Jan. 14 introducing price control for all goods and services.

However vendors in Yaounde's main markets were selling sugar at 450 CFA Saturday instead of 275. Pharmacies throughout the country either raised prices by 75 per cent or ceased trading.

Both Nissan and Toyota reported double-digit increases in vehicles produced overseas last year, as they continued the production shift away from Japan where the rapid rise in the value of the yen has hit competitiveness.

Toyota Motor Corp., said domestic sales fell 7.4 per cent to 2,065,687 units, representing a 31.9 per cent share of the Japanese market, down 0.2 per cent point from the previous year.

Car sales fell by 6.6 per cent to 1.4 million units and sales of trucks and buses fell by 9.5 per cent to 592,643, appreciation of the yen against foreign currencies for the export slump.

Nissan blamed the "worldwide sluggish economy and

Japan's motor vehicle output falls 10.2%

TOKYO (AFP) — Japan's production of motor vehicles in 1993 fell 10.2 per cent from the previous year to 11.23 million units, the sharpest decline since 1974 when output fell 7.5 per cent. But overseas output expanded, an industry association said Monday.

The decline also marked the first time since the end of World War II that annual motor vehicle output in Japan has fallen for three years in a row, the Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association said.

An association official attributed the decline to a 7.1 per cent fall in domestic demand and an estimated 11 per cent drop in exports, as well as growing overseas production.

The official said the 1993 figure for overall overseas production by Japanese automakers was not available, but that their output in the United States rose 8.3 per cent from 1992 to 1.827,802 units in 1993.

Overall overseas output totaled 2,797,570 units in 1992, up 6.5 per cent from 1991, according to the association.

Last year, production of cars in Japan fell 9.4 per cent from the previous year to 8,497,094 units for three straight years of decline, while domestic truck output fell 12.6 per cent to 2,682,377 units for five consecutive years of decline.

Output of buses in Japan fell 7.6 per cent to 48,074 units. In December alone, motor vehicle output in Japan

plunged 18.3 per cent to 966,475 units, the sharpest fall since June 1974 when output fell 19.3 per cent, marking the 15th successive year-on-year fall.

It was also the first time in 19 years that a double-digit decline continued for four months in a row, the association said.

Motorcycle production in Japan in 1993 meanwhile fell 5.4 per cent from the previous year to 3,023,154 units, down for the first time in four years, in December alone, motorcycle output fell 16.1 per cent from a year earlier to 221,652 units for the ninth successive decline.

Nissan blamed the "worldwide sluggish economy and

THE BETTER HALF. By Harris



JUMBLE

Scramble these four Jumbles. A letter to each square, to form ordinary words.

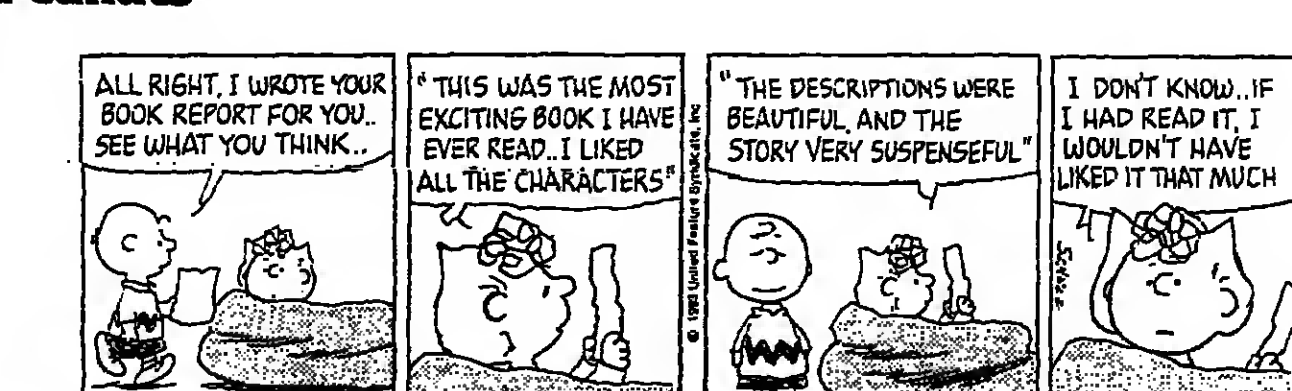
VELGA
DUNET
YSTOL
JACRIN

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

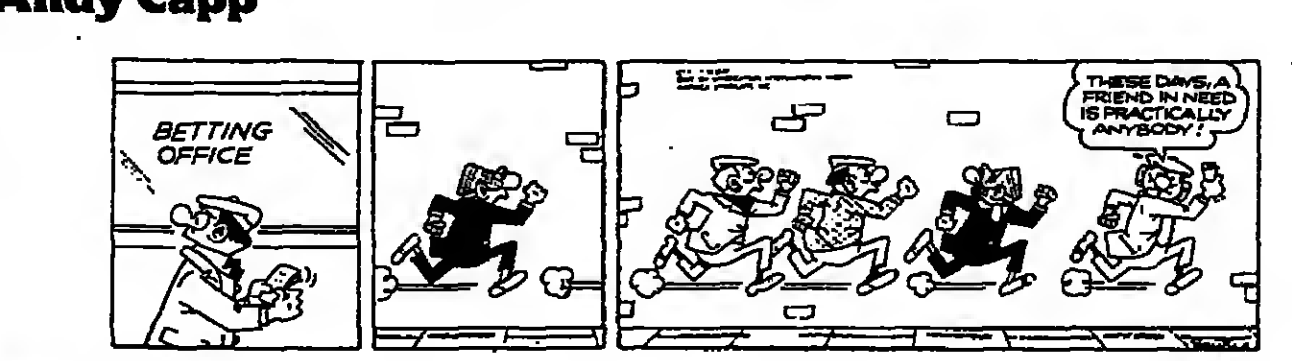
Answers tomorrow

Jumbles: CROWN STOIC BEGONE LEOGER
Answer: What the showcheck crew called the bird's visit — A "GOOD TERM"

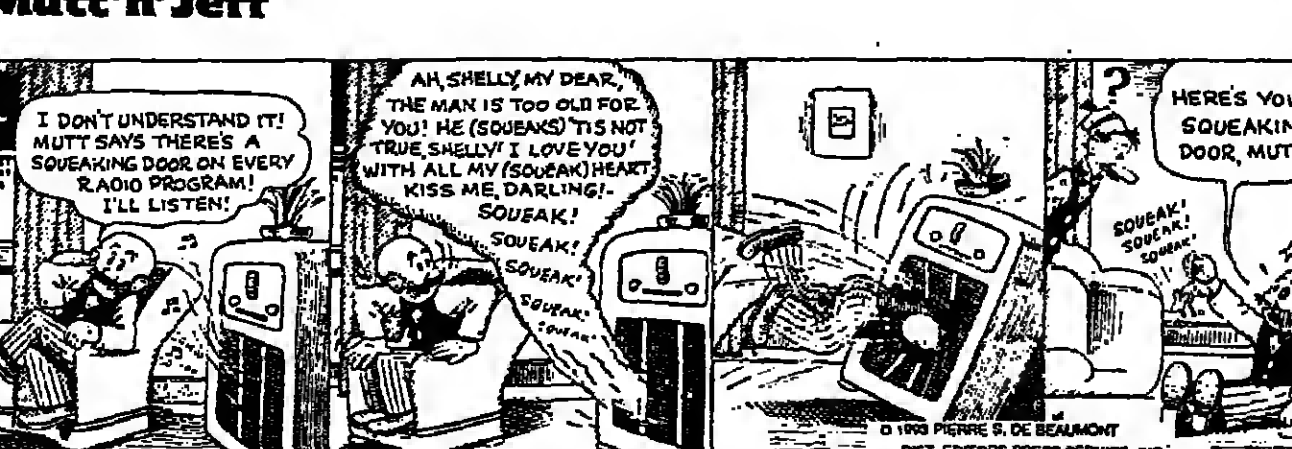
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



China and Sudan plan to set up bank

KHARTOUM (R) — Sudan and China have signed a memorandum of understanding to set up a joint bank, a Khartoum newspaper said Monday. The government-owned Al Sudan Al Hadith (modern Sudan) said the \$100 million capital bank would support joint projects, especially assembly plants, oil prospecting, mining, industry, agriculture and commerce. It said Sudanese and Chinese banks and companies would provide the bank's capital. Saeed Osman Mahjoub, chairman and general manager of El Nilein Industrial Development Bank, signed the memorandum for Sudan Sunday, the newspaper said. Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen visited Sudan last week and discussed bilateral cooperation.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY JANUARY 25, 1994
By Thomas S. Person, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Be alert to a new means by which you can impress others with your ability and construct a plan of action that will add to your income in the future without changing the mainstream of your current life.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Important you handle all personal and confidential matters wisely this morning. Don't leave anything to chance. Be gay, cheerful and kind.

TAURUS: (April 21 to May 20) Be sure to come to a better understanding with those to whom money matters are of prime importance, preferable in the morning.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Be absolutely ethical and precise this morning with regard to any public affairs or duties that are yours so you will have respect by highs.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) While new outlets or ideas may not work out ideally with present setup and associates this morning, be patient and allow enough time for adjustments.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Morning is not good for adding to present obligations, which already are numerous. Tonight is excellent, however, for taking steps that will lead to greater abundance as well as popularity.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 23) Morning may find associates and close ties disagreeing on practical matters, so be sure to

seer clear of both to keep from getting in the middle of some problem situation.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 23) You are tempted to go off on some tangent this morning, which would be unwise. Get tasks completed instead and then the rest of the day and evening can be with interesting friends for diversion.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) It is much wiser to handle important financial affairs during the morning although you are tempted to go off to some new interest.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You find that almost anything you set your mind to can be accomplished today, with exception of anything with family, since they are not ideally attuned to you at this time.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Letters or messages you receive in the morning may not be very encouraging or help to relieve present worries, but the latter part of the day and evening bring a higher-up to your assistance.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Morning is best for any handling of finances as well as knowing what close ties require of you, but don't let one interfere with the other.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Do nothing that will disturb a higher-up or there can be trouble later on. Be certain to carry through along standard methods instead.

THE Daily Crossword by Melvin Karmworthy

ACROSS

- Cap follower?
- Zeus's love
- Give me
- First killer
- Second image
- Painter Edvard
- O'Neill opus
- Part of GAO
- Royal life
- 22 — duck
- 26 — feather
- 27 — merit of movies
- 28 — non grata
- 29 — diamonds
- 30 — Aching
- 31 — Indian
- 32 — dignitaries from out of town
- 33 — Pertume
- 34 — Siskiyah
- 35 — Connector
- 36 — Biceps and triceps
- 37 — Life stones, for short
- 38 — Cruises
- 39 — Pat
- 40 — Lisa
- 41 — Fictional dog
- 42 — Against fighting
- 43 — Lloyd Douglas title
- 44 — King of Judea
- 45 — Colosseum
- 46 — Centon's state
- 47 — Night sound
- 48 — Boredom
- 49 — Lure and honey
- 50 — Promise
- 51 — Play part
- 52 — Scrooge word
- 53 — Provocative
- 54 — Riddle
- 55 — Legal claim
- 56 — Too
- 57 — Stadium sound
- 58 — Whitten
- 59 — history
- 60 — arms, amul
- 61 — Some actors
- 62 — a million (travels)
- 63 — Parts subway
- 64 — Flammable liquid
- 65 — Passing grade
- 66 — History Muse
- 67 — Lawful
- 68 — "of ropes"
- 69 — 23 — "of ropes"
- 70 — Pina gona
- 71 — Lure serving
- 72 — Sea eagle
- 73 — Kindly
- 74 — Peer Gyn's mother
- 75 — Pompous walk
- 76 — Fascist
- 77 — Columbus town
- 78 — Concludes
- 79 — "Woman"
- 80 — For shame!
- 81 — Dogtags, e.g.
- 82 — Lost
- 83 — Chat
- 84 — Take, as a loan
- 85 — Shaping tool
- 86 — Pale
- 87 — Severe
- 88 — Ben Kham
- 89 — Musical piece
- 90 — At
- 91 — and
- 92 — where/for
- 93 — Arm
- 94 — Electrical unit
- 95 — Publicize
- 96 — Drowse

Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:

1. CAP FOLLOWER? 2. ZEUS'S LOVE 3. GIVE ME 4. FIRST KILLER 5. SECOND IMAGE 6. PAINTER EDVARD 7. O'NEILL OPUS 8. PART OF GAO 9. ROYAL LIFE 10. 22 — DUCK 11. 26 — FEATHER 12. 27 — MERIT OF MOVIES 13. 28 — NON GRATA 14. 29 — DIAMONDS 15. 30 — ACHING 16. 31 — INDIAN 17. 32 — DIGNITARIES FROM OUT OF TOWN 18. 33 — PERTUME 19. 34 — SISKIYAH 20. 35 — CONNECTOR 21. 36 — BICEPS AND TRICEPS 22. 37 — LIFE STONES, FOR SHORT 23. 38 — CRUISES 24. 39 — PAT 25. 40 — LISA 26. 41 — FICTIONAL DOG 27. 42 — AGAINST FIGHTING 28. 43 — LLOYD DOUGLAS TITLE 29. 44 — KING OF JUDEA 30. 45 — COLOSSEUM 31. 46 — CENTON'S STATE 32. 47 — NIGHT SOUND 33. 48 — BOREDOM 34. 49 — LURE AND HONEY 35. 50 — PROMISE 36. 51 — PLAY PART 37. 52 — SCROOGE WORD 38. 53 — PROVOCATIVE 39. 54 — RIDDLE 40. 55 — LEGAL CLAIM 41. 56 — TOO 42. 57 — STADIUM SOUND 43. 58 — WHITTEN 44. 59 — HISTORY 45. 60 — ARMS, AMUL 46. 61 — SOME ACTORS 47. 62 — A MILLION (TRAVELS) 48. 63 — PARTS SUBWAY 49. 64 — FLAMMABLE LIQUID 50. 65 — PASSING GRADE 51. 66 — HISTORY MUSE 52. 67 — LAWFUL 53. 68 — "OF ROPES" 54. 69 — 23 — "OF ROPES" 55. 70 — PINA GONA 56. 71 — LURE SERVING 57. 72 — SEA EAGLE 58. 73 — KINDLY 59. 74 — PEER GYN'S MOTHER 60. 75 — POMPUS WALK 61. 76 — FASCIST 62. 77 — COLUMBUS TOWN 63. 78 — CONCLUDES 64. 79 — "WOMAN" 65. 80 — FOR SHAME! 66. 81 — DOGTAGS, E.G. 67. 82 — LOST 68. 83 — CHAT 69. 84 — TAKE, AS A LOAN 70. 85. SHAPING TOOL 86. PALE 87. SEVERE 88. BEN KHAM 89. MUSICAL PIECE 90. AT 91. AND 92. WHERE/FOR 93. ARM 94. ELECTRICAL UNIT 95. PUBLICIZE 96. DROUSE

Arab Gulf countries begin steps to link stock markets

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Wealthy Arab Gulf states have begun steps to link their burgeoning stock markets as part of an agreement to integrate their oil-dependent economies, officials of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have said.

Economy and trade ministers of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have set up a committee to follow up the project, which is

essential for the creation of a common Gulf market, the sources said.

"The committee, which groups officials from the economy and trade ministries in member states, met in Riyadh two weeks ago to chalk out an action plan for the coming period," a United Arab Emirates (UAE) trade ministry source said.

"It will meet again after visiting all members to prepare a report on the stock markets and present it to the ministers."

GCC states — Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman and the UAE — agreed to link their stock exchanges under an accord they signed a year after they set up their political, defence and economic alliance in 1981.

The accord also stipulated unification of customs tariffs on foreign imports, facilitating movement of trade and individuals, aligning their currencies and allowing them to open bank branches in any member.

The agreement must eventually lead to a common Gulf market, for which they have set the year 2000 as a deadline. But economists doubt such a market would see light on time as the pace of integration has remained slow and differences persisted among member states.

Such differences have hindered currency alignment as some members are opposed to delinking their notes from the U.S. dollar while others want their currencies pegged to a basket of currencies to offset any fluctuations.

Customs tariffs also remained widely varied while only three members — Kuwait, Bahrain and Oman — have partially implemented a GCC summit decision to open their stock markets to citizens from all members.

Other obstacles include disparities in corporate laws in the GCC and the absence of official floors in Qatar and the UAE. Saudi Arabia, the world's leading oil producer, also has no formal exchange but share dealing is carried out through the most advanced bank network in the Middle East.

The UAE daily Al Khaleej said the GCC stocks committee discussed development of markets in member states and establishment of floors in the remaining members as a prelude for merging their markets.

"The committee agreed on the need for finding contact channels between stock markets in the GCC by mutual listing of trading institutions so all citizens will have an access to shares," it said.

It said the committee also agreed to work for activating regional markets by setting up investment funds, brokerage houses, settlement centres, consultancy and investment services companies and other relevant bodies.

It said the participants urged member states to encourage market-makers, which play a key role in boosting activity by creating investment portfolios in the market and issuing shares.

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COMPANY NAME	TRADED VOLUME	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
ARAB BANK	199,310	193,800	193,800	191,800
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	988,680	1,150	1,150	1,120
ARAB INVESTMENT BANK	75,865	4,950	4,950	4,900
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	10,917	2,210	2,210	2,130
THE HOUSING BANK	35,452	2,150	2,150	2,110
JORDAN SECURITIES BANK	98,982	1,800	1,800	1,750
JORDAN TRADING BANK	51,957	3,200	3,200	3,120
JORDAN INVESTMENT BANK	274,790	1,980	1,970	1,940
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	14,960	4,850	4,850	4,810
JORDAN BANK FOR TRADING & INVESTMENT	12,292	5,530	5,530	5,250
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	23,047	4,250	4,250	4,200
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	12,270	7,700	7,600	7,500
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	11,860	9,900	9,800	9,700
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	230,002	1,990	1,990	1,990
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	12,292	4,700	4,700	4,650
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	56,365	2,740	2,730	2,600
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	178,110	2,480	2,480	2,430
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	1,239	4,980	4,980	4,980
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	3,632	2,150	2,150	2,140
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	12,292	1,690	1,690	1,670
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	36,184	4,080	4,080	4,060
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	21,015	1,690	1,690	1,670
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	54	0,950	0,940	0,940
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	342	1,680	1,710	1,710
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	13,011	13,600	13,700	13,700
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	51,225	2,290	2,300	2,270
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	71,152	13,470	13,480	13,480
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	1,284	1,740	1,730	1,730
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	159,374	3,110	3,100	3,090
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	30,420	3,200	3,200	3,200
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	38,175	10,500	10,450	10,450
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	12,420	3,200	3,200	3,200
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	30,420	3,200	3,200	3,200
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	203,005	8,350	8,350	8,350
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	12,292	6,530	6,530	6,530
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	1,554	3,050	3,130	3,100
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	1,850	3,710	3,700	3,700
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	13,790	2,440	2,440	2,440
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	30,420	3,200	3,200	3,200
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	2,930	2,800	2,760	2,800
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	0,376	0,760	0,760	0,760
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	177,643	17,100	17,100	17,100
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	13,790	2,440	2,440	2,440
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	30,420	3,200	3,200	3,200
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	1,953	1,600	1,570	1,550
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	14,080	0,390	0,390	0,390
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	29,928	5,100	5,100	5,200
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	2,125	2,570	2,540	2,550
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	3,127	3,180	3,180	3,180
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	7,975	7,500	7,550	7,600
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	1,239	2,240	2,240	2,240
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	2,169	7,850	7,850	7,850
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	32,295	7,850	7,850	7,850
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	3,252	2,480	2,480	2,480
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	5,092	2,400	2,400	2,380
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	6,288	1,300	1,280	1,280
JORDAN TRADING & INVESTMENT BANK	29,375	5,680	5,680	5,670
GRAND TOTAL	5,140,667			

NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET 1,222,990
TRADED VOLUME IN THE PARALLEL MARKET 1 JD 187,992

Financial Markets

Jordan Times
in co-operation with
Cairo Amman Bank

Eurocurrency Interest Rates Date: 24/1/1994

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	2.96	3.12	3.34	3.59
Sterling Pound	5.25	5.18	5.12	5.06
Deutsche Mark	6.00	5.81	5.62	5.31
Swiss Franc	4.00	3.88	3.75	3.50
French Franc	6.46	6.25	5.93	5.56
Japanese Yen	2.18	2.06	1.93	1.87
European Currency Unit	6.56	6.25	6.06	5.56

Precious Metals Date: 24/1/1994

Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm
Gold	380.75	7.50	Silver	5.03	0.115

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin Date: 24/1/1994

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.7060	0.7080
Sterling Pound	1.0519	1.0572
Deutsche Mark	0.4022	0.4042
Swiss Franc	0.4794	0.4818
French Franc	0.1164	0.1190
Japanese Yen	0.6292	0.6323
Dutch Guilder	0.3589	0.3607
Swedish Krona	0.0414	0.0416
Italian Lira	0.0414	0.0416
Belgian Franc	0.0414	0.0416

Other Currencies Date: 24/1/1994

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.8530	1.8700
Lebanese Lira	0.040575	0.041255
Saudi Riyal	0.1879	0.1888
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.3570	2.3670
Qatari Riyal	0.1917	0.1926
Egyptian Pound	0.2050	0.2200
Omani Riyal	1.8700	1.8270
UAE Dirham	0.1917	0.1926
Greek Drachma	0.2685	0.3175
Cypriot Pound	1.3275	1.3745

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London Foreign Exchange and bullion markets Monday.

	1.3104/14	Canadian dollar
U.S. \$1.00 costs	1.7530/40	Deutsche marks
	1.9635/45	Dutch guilders
	1.4682/92	Swiss francs
	36.50/54	Belgian francs
	5.9482/32	French francs
	1706.3/7.8	Italian lire
	112.05/15	Japanese yen
	8.0677/77	Swedish crowns
	7.5320/70	Norwegian crowns
	6.8040/90	Danish crowns
One sterling	\$1.4915/25	
One ounce of gold	\$381.40/381.80	

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U.K. general assumes troubled U.N. command in Bosnia

SARAJEVO (Agencies) — U.N. peacekeepers in Bosnia got a new commander Monday, and the head of all U.N. troops in former Yugoslavia demanded once again that his forces be allowed to call in air strikes.

Lt.-Gen. Sir Michael Rose of Britain assumed command from Lt.-Gen. Francis Briquemont of Belgium Monday. The 53-year-old Briton formerly headed the elite Special Air Service (SAS) commandos and led SAS regiments during the American embassy siege crisis in Iran and the Falklands War with Argentina.

Gen. Briquemont is leaving his post early after criticizing U.N. operations in Bosnia.

Asked whether he had been brought in to organise the withdrawal of U.N. forces from Bosnia, Gen. Rose replied: "That is not a part of our intentions at the moment." He did not elaborate.

In a separate development, the United Nations evacuated six gravely ill people Monday, including two brothers wounded in a weekend mortar attack, despite Bosnian Serb efforts to block them.

Gen. Jean Cot, the commander of U.N. forces in former Yugoslavia, commended Gen. Briquemont, 58, for six months of "tireless" service.

"We must succeed because it seems to me impossible for those who are waging this war not to realise that they have crossed the threshold of sanity

in a civilised land," he told Gen. Rose during the change-of-command ceremony. "The survival of their peoples is at stake and beyond them, the future of the whole of Europe."

But Gen. Cot, who is also leaving his post early, left open the future of the peacekeepers in Bosnia.

"I cannot see how it's possible that we could leave this land before the end of the winter," Gen. Cot said. "But if after the winter people are determined that they will not have peace, that they want war, then we shall see."

In a brief press conference afterward, Gen. Cot denied that his and Gen. Briquemont's departures symbolised "a failed policy."

But he acknowledged problems with U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali, who has refused to authorise Gen. Cot to call in air strikes on Bosnian Serb positions.

"The problem is very simple. In case of a massive attack against the safe areas of anywhere else, the only means that we have of reacting immediately, is close air support," Gen. Cot said, speaking through an interpreter. "Immediately means three minutes. That would be perfect. Half an hour would be nice. But it's certainly not more than that."

Gen. Rose said he agreed

with Gen. Cot on "the right of immediate response," but again did not elaborate.

However, he and Gen. Briquemont differed on whether they had enough troops for the U.N. mandate.

"My first briefing... indicates to me that we do have the resources that we need in this country, certainly to assist properly with the aid convoys," Gen. Rose said.

But Gen. Briquemont, asked to comment, said: "I don't know how many times I shall have to repeat that we do not have enough means, both in Croatia and in Bosnia."

He estimated three million Bosnians need U.N. aid to survive this winter as the republic's civil war drags into its 21st month. Ethnic Serbs who rebelled against the republic's decision to secede from Serb-dominated Yugoslavia have captured 70 per cent of Bosnia, leaving Croats and the Muslim-led government to fight over the rest.

As the generals exchanged command, U.N. aid officials evacuated six people for medical treatment. The group included two brothers, age 11 and 13, wounded in a mortar attack Saturday that killed six children playing in the snow. They were to be taken to hospitals in Bologna, Italy, the United Arab Emirates and Finland.

Dr. Ghali said in an interview published Monday that the international community

lacks the will to use force to end Bosnia-Herzegovina's civil war.

Dr. Ghali told the International Herald Tribune that if there is no will to impose a solution, the U.N. can only negotiate, provide humanitarian aid, and keep fighting from spreading.

Dr. Ghali said that he would ask the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) to make good on pledges to launch air attacks if his military and political representatives on the ground seek them. "But are you sure NATO is really willing to use force?" Dr. Ghali was quoted as asking.

"It may be the beginning of an escalation, of a wider war that would engulf the neighbouring states, Kosovo, Macedonia and the whole of the Balkans," he said.

Two weeks ago, NATO offered air support to open the Tuzla Airport to humanitarian supplies, and to relieve the Canadian peacekeeping contingent at Srebrenica. The U.N. has made no request in either case.

"This is a new and very specific situation," Dr. Ghali was quoted as saying. "That's why I sent my undersecretary for political affairs to NATO for further details."

Dr. Ghali said that he had "received assurances" that the Srebrenica impasse would be resolved "in the next few days. Tuzla is another matter."



Earthquake victims line up for breakfast at a food distribution centre at Lanark Park, near Northridge, California (AFP photo)

Los Angeles braces for more hardships

LOS ANGELES (R) — After the powerful earthquake that has devastated Los Angeles, residents braced Monday for further hardship as they struggled to return to work and rebuild their lives.

The extent of the damage from last Monday's 6.6 magnitude earthquake became clearer Sunday when Governor Pete Wilson said he expected losses to exceed the \$30 billion of 1992's hurricane Andrew.

Until the Northridge quake, Andrew had been the costliest natural disaster in U.S. history.

"This quake occurred... in the heart of a densely populated urban area," the Republican governor told reporters.

"It's a national problem just as the floods were in the mid-west, just as relief to the victims of hurricane Andrew required a national response," Mr. Wilson said.

The quake has killed 57 and made more than 25,000 homeless. More than 8,000 have been injured. Strong aftershocks continued, keeping nerves jangling.

Transportation Secretary Federico Pena warned residents to be prepared for extra-long commutes now that residents who stayed home last

week would be returning to work.

There were signs public transportation has gained favour. Ridership on the Metrolink train from hard-hit Santa Clarita to downtown Los Angeles rose 1,000 per cent last week, said spokesman Peter Hidalgo.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) officials, mindful of the harsh criticism they faced in the aftermath of hurricane Andrew, were racing to streamline the relief process after admitting they had underestimated the magnitude of the crisis.

FEMA Director James Lee Witt said 1,500 staff members were brought in and new offices were being opened.

Housing Secretary Henry Cisneros said more than 10,000 housing units in about 2,000 buildings were uninhabitable.

He said 1,200 vouchers to rent new homes were distributed to victims. With a 10 per cent vacancy rate in the San Fernando Valley, families should be able to find suitable housing, Mr. Cisneros said.

In makeshift chapels and tent cities, residents flocked to church services Sunday to give thanks for their survival and gather strength to begin picking up the pieces of their lives.

Authorities said they made progress in efforts to convince people living in cars, vacant lots and primitive camps to return to their homes or seek immediate shelter.

Some refugees, including Mexican and Central American immigrants, said they stayed in the open out of fear even though their homes were found to be safe.

National Guard officers said they were told to be prepared to maintain the tents they erected for up to two weeks, but some local politicians worried tent cities might be no longer.

With the ground still heaving, rumours of an imminent magnitude-7.0 "super-quake" circulated widely. Seismologists rushed out a statement bluntly declaring: "It is impossible to predict earthquakes."

Weather forecasters predicted light rain over the next two days, keeping pressure on to find shelter for thousands still living outside. However, the region was spared rain Sunday.

In a bizarre scene, residents of a collapsed apartment building where 16 people died were allowed to dash inside, load up bags with as many belongings as they could in 10 minutes and then dash out.

Lesotho cabinet holds crisis session

MASERU (R) — Lesotho's cabinet held a crisis session Monday during a lull in fighting between rival arm factions in the mountainous southern African kingdom, government sources said.

The capital Maseru was tense in anticipation of renewed battles but shops and businesses opened after initial hesitancy.

The lull was holding after more than 12 hours, but government and diplomatic sources expected fresh clashes. "There is a break in the fighting, but both sides are still dug in and one side or the other will renew the attack," one said.

Five soldiers have been killed since fighting began 10 days ago. At least two soldiers were killed and four civilians wounded Sunday when the two sides traded artillery and mortar fire across the outskirts of the city.

The cabinet met after Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle, said to be in ill health and looking older than his 75 years, appeared to have shifted his ground over a request for South African military intervention to end the crisis which has shaken his 10-month-old government.

The South African Foreign Ministry said the Lesotho government had requested military intervention, but Mr. Mokhehle said through a government spokesman Monday this was only one option being considered and nothing had yet been decided.

The fighting involves about 600 men from the big Makanyane barracks near the international airport about eight kilometres southeast of the city and 150 men from a reconnaissance support company based at the Defence Force Headquarters barracks on the southern edge of the city.

Government officials and diplomats were unable to explain the cause of the bitter feud between the two sides, which followed demands earlier in the month for a 100 per cent pay increase and boosts in allowances.

A paratrooper from the Defence Force Barracks patrolling a ridge overlooking the city told Reuters: "We are fighting with each other. We are fighting for the benefits that we want."

"At first last week we thought that it is for money, but now it is political."

He said the Makanyane troops wanted to install in power the main opposition Basotho National Party (BNP), decisively beaten by Mr. Mokhehle's Basotho Congress Party (BCP) last March in the country's first multiparty elections in two decades.

Diplomatic sources said there was no firm indication of BNP involvement in the crisis. There was also no suggestion that a coup was in the offing, they added.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Gunman wounds former head of Greek Bank

ATHENS (R) — A gunman shot and wounded Mihailis Vranopoulos, former head of Greece's largest commercial bank, as he walked to work in central Athens Monday, police said. The gunman pumped four rounds from a .45 calibre automatic pistol into Mr. Vranopoulos as he walked along Solomos Street in the heart of Athens. The gunman fled into the rush hour traffic on a motorcycle driven by an accomplice, police said. Mr. Vranopoulos, chairman and managing director of the National Bank of Greece until October, was rushed to hospital and was in a serious condition in the operating room, police said. A second person, possibly accompanying Mr. Vranopoulos, was also wounded and had been taken to hospital, they said. The attack bore the hallmarks of the left-wing extremist group Nov. 17, which has killed 19 diplomats, politicians and business leaders in Athens since 1975, police said.

'War party' kill 5 in S. Africa

DURBAN (R) — A "war party" of 25 black gunmen shot dead five people in a black settlement in South Africa's Natal province, police said Monday. The five, killed late Sunday night, were among 12 people who died in weekend violence in the province, a spokesman added. The 25 gunmen, armed with AK-47 rifles and shotguns, raided several houses in the Nqoyaneni rural district near Isipingo, spokesman Major Bala Naidoo said. The motive for the attack, in which two people were wounded, was not known and no arrests had been made, he added. Four people were killed Saturday at Ndwedwe near Stanger, north of Durban, when around a group of men set shacks in the area alight. Police had no further details. A 30-year-old woman was killed in Hibberdene on the south coast when two men opened fire in a house Saturday night. A KwaZulu policeman was shot and killed in his sleep in the Ekuvukeni rural area near Dundee Friday night when a group of armed men fired several shots at him. At Ezakheni near Ladysmith, a 26-year-old man was killed and another wounded when a man raked a house with AK-47 bullets.

Azeri troops reclaim territory

MOSCOW (AFP) — Azerbaijani troops have reclaimed from separatist Armenians the entire northern region of Kelbajar, northwest of the disputed enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh, the Azerbaijan Defence Ministry reported Monday. The ministry reported, cited by the Turan News Agency, said its troops reclaimed 12 villages seized last year and now hold several strategic "points that would allow it to control the main road leading from Kelbajar to Agdam," east of the enclave. The ministry said the army destroyed or captured several tanks of armoured vehicles from the separatists during heavy fighting last week. The agency said Armenians claiming to be from a Russian army division based in Armenia were also taken prisoner. It said their capture confirmed earlier reports from Stepanakert that "Yerevan and Russian soldiers" were helping the separatists. The six-year conflict between the two sides has claimed nearly 20,000 lives.

Dismantled warhead plutonium is dangerous

WASHINGTON (R) — More than 100 tonnes of plutonium coming out of dismantled cold war nuclear weapons is dangerous because there is no way yet to get rid of it and no sure plan for keeping it away from terrorists and tyrants, according to a report released Monday. The National Academy of Sciences report urged President Bill Clinton to do more than he already has to establish an international group with high-level leadership to deal with the problem. "None of the options yet identified for managing this material can eliminate the danger," the report said, "all they can do is reduce the risks." It said urgent steps are needed to safeguard weapons-grade plutonium as well as plutonium in the former Soviet Union where it said Russian officials have publicly confirmed three thefts of uranium though none of plutonium.

Austrian president in crisis talks

VIENNA (R) — Austrian President Thomas Klestil, battling a love-affair scandal, called advisers to crisis talks Monday amid pressure to ditch his mistakes or resign. Mr. Klestil's wife Edith said at the weekend she had left her husband of 37 years because she felt the role of first lady had been usurped by close aide Margot Loeffler. 39. "She or quit," said the country's biggest newspaper in a banner headline urging Mr. Klestil to face the music. Mr. Klestil's spokesman Heinz Nussbaumer was not immediately available to answer questions. An assistant said he was attending "a crisis meeting" at the presidential Hofburg Palace. The mass-circulation Neue Kronen Zeitung said Mr. Klestil, 61, owed it to his post and his country to answer charges that an affair with Ms. Loeffler was behind the breach in his marriage. "Public pressure on the president is growing," said the influential tabloid, "Klestil must face these serious charges." His wife Edith has said "it would help" if Ms. Loeffler, an attractive, dark-haired diplomat, was given a foreign posting.

Ethiopian hijacker seek asylum in Rome

ROME (R) — An Ethiopian hijacker armed with a knife surrendered in Rome Monday after seizing an Ethiopian Airlines plane over West Africa in attempt to get political asylum in Italy.

Ethiopia's ambassador to Italy said the hijacker, named by police as Mulat Getachew, 25, told him he was a former officer in the Horn of Africa country's armed forces.

The man, who was dressed entirely in black, hijacked the Boeing 757 with 43 people on board shortly after it took off from Dakar, Senegal, Sunday night on a flight to Addis Ababa via Bamako, Mali, and Niamey in Niger, police said.

He ordered the pilot to change course for Italy and gave himself up peacefully less than one hour after the airliner touched down at Rome's Ciampino Airport at 3.37 a.m. (0237 GMT). Police said he was expected to be charged with air piracy.

None of the 32 passengers, who were mainly Africans, or 11 crew was hurt during the second such hijacking to Italy in less than 18 months.

"The first we heard was when the captain announced that a man was threatening him. He told us we had to take another route because he (the hijacker) wanted to go to Rome," passenger Abdoulaye Thiam, a Senegalese lawyer, told Reuters.

Bruised Hosokawa to stay on and battle for reforms

TOKYO (R) — Japanese Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa, his job on the line after a crushing parliamentary defeat, promised Monday to push ahead with his ill-fated electoral and anti-corruption reforms.

Lawmakers and political experts agree, however, Mr. Hosokawa and his broad coalition have little chance of reaching a face-saving deal with a stubborn opposition before the reform bills expire Saturday, last day of the current session.

"There's almost no prospect that political reform legislation will be approved because the time for deal-making has run out," said veteran political journalist Fumio Kuno.

"Hosokawa can't quit right away because first he has to finish drafting economic stimulus measures and the new (fiscal 1994/95) budget," he said. "But after that's done he's likely either to call snap elections or resign along with his cabinet and let Foreign Minister (Tsutomu) Hata take over as the new coalition leader."

Mr. Hosokawa suffered a crippling setback Friday when the upper house rejected reform bills aimed at radically changing the electoral system, and slapping strict curbs on corruption in public life. Seventeen members of the

Socialist Party, the largest coalition group, crossed the floor to ensure the defeat of reforms which they believed would destroy their party.

Tokyo share prices went into a tailspin at the start of trading Monday. The Nikkei average plunged over 800 points as traders reacted to the stinging setback and the likelihood of further delays in drafting urgent anti-recession measures.

Mr. Hosokawa, who has staked his job on enacting laws to clean up corrupt politics, told coalition party leaders Monday he was determined to find a way to push through the reform bills passed by the lower house last November.

"The upper house voted down the political reform bills by a 12-vote margin and this is a grave situation," his spokesman quoted him as saying. "However, we must also consider that the bills were passed by the lower house by a 44-vote margin."

He later told Japanese reporters he hoped the opposition Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) would agree to formation of a 20-member Joint House Committee, which can be called into session to break a parliamentary deadlock.

Such a bicameral committee would deliberate a compromise plan but the LDP, split into

pro- and anti-reform camps, has yet to clarify its demands.

"Whether or not we can make a deal will depend on how far the coalition is ready to bend," said Michio Watanabe, leader of one of the main LDP groups. "They're going to have to agree to 95 per cent of our demands, including allowing corporate donations (to individual politicians)."

Analyst Kuno said the governing coalition was unlikely to revise its proposed curb on such big business funding given the string of corruption scandals highlighting illegal ties between politicians on the take and firms seeking favours.

"Hosokawa's coalition would fall apart if they gave in on that point," Mr. Kuno said. "It's the only demand that the Socialists refuse to consider."

Doing business with the LDP has its drawbacks. It was the Conservative Party, during its 1955-1993 monopoly on power, which perfected the system of money politics that spawned all the recent scandals.

After it reneged on enacting political reform last year for a second time, outraged voters rebelled and made possible the coalition party's landmark election victory in July.

Business leaders, wary of political uncertainty, urged the

coalition and the LDP to compromise to avoid new elections.

Takeshi Nagano, head of the powerful Japan Federation of Employers' Associations, said over the weekend he hoped the two sides would strike a deal and urged Mr. Hosokawa not to quit.

"He (Nagano) and other business leaders support Hosokawa and don't want to see the country fall into chaos," said an academic who advises Mr. Hosokawa on U.S.-Japan trade.

The university professor, who asked not to be identified, said he hoped Mr. Hosokawa would reject U.S. demands for market share targets in specific areas when he meets President Bill Clinton in Washington on Feb. 11.

"This is the only time that Mr. Hosokawa can turn his weakness into strength," the academic said. "Business leaders and bureaucrats are all opposed to the U.S. demands... It is in (Hosokawa's) interest to reject the demands."

Japan has come under American pressure to agree on improved market access in three sectors — car trade, insurance and government procurement of medical and telecommunications equipment — by the Washington meeting.

Big Ben clock misses a beat

LONDON (R) — Big Ben, Britain's most famous clock, which much of the nation keeps time, mysteriously stopped for three hours Sunday evening, officials said. Clockmakers Thwaites And Reed got the clock going again at 9.30 p.m. three hours 10 minutes after it stopped. Big Ben, which gives its name to its clocktower in London's Gothic Houses of Parliament, is regularly heard around the world by listeners to British Broadcasting Corporation Radio.

U.S. sailor gives birth at sea

GAETA, Italy (R) — A woman sailor on a U.S. Navy ship who complained of stomach cramps gave birth five minutes later to a five-pound (2.2-kg) boy, a navy spokesman said Monday. Commander Jeffrey P. Smallwood, spokesman at the U.S. Naval Fleet base at Gaeta near Naples, said the baby was born on the repair ship Yellowstone on Jan. 16. "It does not happen every day," Commander Smallwood said when asked if the birth was the first aboard ship in U.S. Navy history. He said the woman, 21, had first denied she was pregnant but when tests proved otherwise on Jan. 14 she said the pregnancy was in its early stages.

The boy, which Commander Smallwood said was a full-term baby, was born on Yellowstone in the port of Gaeta. "She went into the sick bay complaining of stomach cramps and five minutes later delivered a baby boy," Commander Smallwood said.

Mother and child were moved to hospital in Naples. Both were doing well and were expected to fly back to the United States. Commander Smallwood declined to identify the woman, whom he said was single. He said she faced no disciplinary charges. The Yellowstone left its Norfolk, Virginia base late last month.

Women in the U.S. Navy started going to sea in the mid-1970s.

On Sunday, he spoke of the difficulties of building a lasting peace and the need to make political changes.

"A political regime cannot be democratised under pressure from an armed force, but at the same time there is a broad consensus on the country's need to carry out socio-political changes," said Mr. Camacho, whose role as peace envoy has raised speculation he might replace Luis Donaldo Colosio as the ruling Institutional Revolutionary (PRI) Party candidate in August presidential elections.

Mr. Camacho's comments were the most sweeping yet by the government about the need for reform. Mr. Salinas earlier said the Chiapas conflict indicated parts of the political system had not done their job.

He announced a ceasefire, reshuffled his cabinet and unveiled a string of initiatives to improve indigenous rights and set up a credible justice system but had so far restricted those proposals to Chiapas.

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Whisky galore

LONDON (R) — Scottish Islander Donald Rodgers has found buried treasure that could be worth thousands of pounds — six vintage whisky bottles from a 1941 shipwreck. He found the bottles — three empty, two half-full and one full and "crystal clear" — while digging a path from his house on the island of Eriskay Saturday. The SS Politician carried 250,000 bottles of whisky when wrecked off the Hebridean Island in 1941. The wreck was plundered by thirsty islanders. Last November, 14 bottles of whisky from the wreck were auctioned in Glasgow for a total of £11,462 (\$17,190).

Husband who had organ sliced faces paternity suit

NIAGARA FALLS, New York (R) — John Wayne Bobbitt, whose wife was found innocent of malicious sexual assault, faces a blood test Monday in a paternity suit brought by a former girlfriend, Beatrice Williams, 21, filed a suit last October seeking child support payments from Bobbitt for her son, who is a little more than a year old. She claims Bobbitt fathered the child while he was separated from his wife, Lorena. A jury last week found Lorena Bobbitt innocent by reason of temporary insanity in cutting off her husband's penis.

NEWS IN BRIEF

ITF uphold Agassi penalty

MELBOURNE (AFP) — The ban on Andre Agassi playing in the United States' opening Davis Cup tie in India has been upheld by the International Tennis Federation (ITF) at a special meeting here. An ITF committee of management decided Monday to uphold the penalty after considering an appeal lodged by the United States Tennis Association. The ban and \$1,500 penalty were imposed after Agassi refused to play his final-day singles match in a World Group play-off tie against the Bahamas in Charlotte, North Carolina, last September. The United States won the tie 5-0 with Richey Reneberg filling in for Agassi in his singles rubber. The U.S., who play India in New Delhi March 25-27, have already named Jim Courier, Todd Martin, Patrick McEnroe and Reneberg in their team.

Saudi Arabia beats China 1-0

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia (AP) — Saudi striker Saeed Owairan hit a bullet-like shot in the 72nd minute to lift Saudi Arabia to a 1-0 victory over China in a friendly soccer match played at the Malaz Stadium Sunday. "In general, I was satisfied with the way we played," Saudi coach Leo Beenhakker said. "I thought we made some mistakes in the first half but we played a solid second half." World Cup-bound Saudi Arabia has been placed in group F with Belgium, Morocco and Holland in the June finals in the United States.

'Venables's appointment due this week'

LONDON (R) — Terry Venables's long wait to be appointed the new England manager should end this week, Graham Kelly, the English Football Association's (FA) chief executive said Monday. Although some members of the selection panel still doubt the former Tottenham chief executive's suitability because of allegations about his financial dealings, his appointment as Graham Taylor's successor is expected by Wednesday, Kelly said. "There will be an announcement this week. We have to have a manager in place for the Denmark match (March 9) and it's inconceivable that we go into February without a manager. If we do go with Terry and very many of us hope that we do — and he accepts — the contract details would have to remain confidential."

Japan's Ogiwara wins 5th title of season

TRONDHEIM, Norway (AP) — Kenji Ogiwara beat fellow Japanese Takanori Kono by one minute, 37.7 seconds in the 15-kilometer cross-country ski race Sunday for his fifth World Cup Nordic combined victory of the season. Ogiwara, who started the race 56.7 seconds ahead of Kono after winning the ski jumping portion Saturday, extended his lead to 95 points ahead of Kono after six meets. Bjarte Engen Vik was third, 2:16.2 behind, and fellow Norwegian Fred Borge Lundberg fourth, 2:25.1 behind. Lundberg skied the fastest 15 kilometres, leading a Norwegian 1-2-3-4 sweep in 38:40.3. Ogiwara was 10th fastest, but had enough of a lead following the ski jumping to compensate.

Shriver tops bill at Chinese tournament

BEIJING (AFP) — Pam Shriver will be the number one attraction in China's first professional women's tennis tournament next month, organisers said Monday. Thirty-two players will compete in the singles for prize money of \$100,000 at the February 12-20 event in Beijing. Last year China hosted its first men's tournament.

N. Korea match to aid quake victims

FULLERTON, California (AFP) — The U.S. World Cup team will meet North Korea here March 12 in an international football friendly to benefit victims of last week's southern California earthquake. The match is one of several possible benefit matches for those harmed by the earthquake, U.S. team general manager Hank Steinbrecher said. The U.S. team drew 1-1 with Switzerland here Saturday. The teams meet each other again June 18 in Detroit in their World Cup opener. The Americans plan to arrive in the area only two or three days before the match. U.S. Coach Bora Milutinovic said his club will continue to live and train in the area of Mission Viejo, California, during the World Cup, with top players returning from Europe as their league seasons conclude. Steinbrecher also said the appointment of Holland's Rinus Michels and Teofilo Cubillas of Peru would not interfere with Milutinovic's role as coach of the U.S. team.

Asakawa to challenge WBA champion

TOKYO (AFP) — Japan's Seiji Asakawa will challenge World Boxing Association (WBA) featherweight champion Eloy Rojas of Venezuela at Kobe in western Japan March 19, his manager said Monday. It will be Rojas' first defence of the crown he wrested from South Korea's Park Yung-Kyo last month. Asakawa was knocked out by Park in a title match held in Jan. 1992.

Top European clubs struggle for goals

PARIS (AFP) — Most of Europe's top clubs marked time at the weekend and appeared to have forgotten how to score goals.

In Spain, Deportivo la Coruna failed to make the most of Barcelona's defeat at Real Sociedad 24 hours earlier when they were held to a goalless draw at Celta Vigo.

In Belgium, Anderlecht also failed to score and were beaten 0-2 in front of their bewildered fans by Seraing — a result which enabled FC Bruges to close to within two points of the leaders since they came away 1-0 winners from Ekeren.

And in Italy, AC Milan, playing at home to Piacenza, appeared to be heading for their fourth goalless draw in as many games until Gianluigi Lentini came to the rescue after coming on as a substitute in the 63rd minute.

Lentini, who cheated death in a horrific car crash last summer, was making only his second appearance for the Italian champions since the accident.

But the winger's entry immediately galvanised Milan who clinched victory with two goals in the space of four minutes from Daniele Massaro and Jean-Pierre Papin.

"My target now is to start a

match but I am prepared to wait until the manager thinks I'm ready," Lentini said.

The victory left Fabio Capello's side with a four-point advantage over nearest rivals Sampdoria and Juventus, who fought out a 1-1 draw in Genoa.

An equaliser from Fabrizio Ravanelli nine minutes from time earned Juventus the point after bald winger Attilio Lombardo had put Sampdoria ahead from the penalty spot (28).

The late equaliser was a cruel blow for England captain David Platt. He was substituted in the 79th minute with victory over the side that discarded him at the end of last season apparently in the bag.

Lazio, who were deprived of their Croat striker Alen Boksic, saw their title ambitions dealt a near fatal blow in a 2-0 defeat by Parma. Defender Alberto di Chiara and Colombian striker Faustino Asprilla got the goals.

Parma are five points behind Milan but Lazio now have a seven-point deficit to make up with only 16 games left.

Dutch midfielder Wim Jonk scored twice (20, 26) as Inter Milan moved ahead of Lazio with a 4-1 thrashing of Cremonese. Massimo Paganin (42) and the Uruguayan Ruben

Sosa (80) got Inter's other goals.

Foggia continued their climb away from the relegation zone with a 5-0 thrashing of bottom-club Lecce.

Atalanta goalkeeper Fabrizio Ferron came within seconds of death during his side's match with Reggiana.

Ferron was knocked unconscious after diving at the feet of Michel Padovano and his heart stopped beating for more than twenty seconds. Only the swift reaction of the club doctor, who rushed on and pumped Ferron's chest to restart his heart, saved his life.

The first round of the French Cup featuring first division clubs saw a massacre of several top flight outfits.

Eight of them to opposition from lower divisions — and only a penalty shoot-out allowed Marseille to scrape into the last 32 after a 0-0 draw with third division Brive.

Cannes, who briefly topped the league earlier this season, were the highest casualties — controversially beaten 3-2 by third division Guingamp.

Lille, Saint Etienne, Le Havre, Martigues, Caen and Angers were the other big names to go out of the competition.

Girardelli wins Jungfrau super giant slalom

WENGEN, Switzerland (AP) — Marc Girardelli, the winningest active skier in the men's World Cup, says he's feeling back in form after finishing first in the super-giant slalom and second in the downhill over the weekend.

"I'm very good now in super G and downhill, but I'm still not in form in the giant slalom and slalom," said Girardelli, who added that he felt tired after Sunday's super G race because he was still shaking off an attack of the flu.

Sunday's victory was No. 43 in his World Cup career and his first win on the circuit this season.

Girardelli's time of 1 minute 41.3 seconds in the super G on the Jungfrau course was a clear 58 hundredths of a second faster than second place Jan Einar Thorsen of Norway. Atle Skjaard of Norway was third at 1:41.95.

The 30-year-old native Austrian, who skis for Luxembourg, looked like he had won in the downhill Saturday, until Switzerland's William Besse placed first in 2:28.88, beating Girardelli by four-hundredths of a second.

The weekend finishes moved Girardelli up to second place from fourth in the overall World Cup standings for the season, past Italy's Alberto Tomba, who dropped to fourth, and Austria's Guenther Mader, now in third.

Girardelli's 703 points for the season helped him gain on overall leader Kjetil Andre Aamodt of Norway.

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Auriol leads in Monte Carlo Rally

MONTE CARLO (R) — Last year's winner Didier Auriol made a brilliant start to the Monte Carlo Rally Monday when he opened up a lead after the first three timed stages.

The Frenchman, driving a Toyota Celica, smashed the record on the third stage between Burzet and St. Martial in the Ardeche Hills by a full 31 seconds as he took an 18 seconds advantage lead over teammate and world champion Juha Kankkunen of Finland.

Auriol's time of 24 minutes nine seconds on the tricky 41.4 kilometres stretch gave him the perfect launching pad for a third successive Monte Carlo victory.

The stage proved disastrous, however, for two other leading drivers, German Armin Schwarzwald and Colin McRae of Britain, who both came to grief on an icy stretch.

Schwarz, who had won the first two stages in his Mitsubishi Lancer, went off the road on a bend where spectators had thrown snow in the drivers' path and McRae, who was following, ran into him in his Subaru.

Schwarz limped to the finish line with a 16-minute delay which put paid to his chances of winning the rally, while McRae, whose car was more badly damaged, lost more than an hour.

Auriol was none too surprised by Schwarz's mishap. "It's impossible to attack. It's much too dangerous," he said of the icy surfaces. "I don't know how Armin didn't go off the road on the downhill from La Souche. It was like a skating rink."

Boxing under threat in Iran

TEHRAN (AFP) — An Iranian newspaper Monday called for boxing to be outlawed, five years after a ban was lifted for the first time since the 1979 Islamic revolution.

"Boxing, whether professional or amateur, is not a sport and has nothing to do with violence," Jomhuri, Islamic said. "Those who promote boxing here are leading Iranian sport along an illegitimate and non-Islamic path."

The paper, which is close to Islamic radicals, called for a ban and criticised the boxing federation for their "lack of concern about the economic, cultural and social costs" of the sport.

Iran banned boxing after the revolution on the grounds that it contradicted Islamic values, but it was authorised in 1989.

The boxing federation is headed by MP Ahmad Nategh Nuri, brother of parliamentary speaker Ali Akbar Nategh Nuri.

Iran hosted an Asian amateur boxing tournament last week in the first such contest to be held here since the revolution. The Islamic republic came in second from 15 countries.

Fighting erupted between fans in a Tehran stadium after an Iranian boxer was knocked out by his Chinese rival.

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AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Washington, Edberg, Muster, Martin move into quarterfinals

MELBOURNE (AP) — Mali- val Washington outlasted Mats Wilander in a five-set marathon Monday night, ending the veteran Swede's fairy-tale run at the Australian Open.

Washington dominated the final set after the two had traded stroke for stroke, error for error. The score was 6-7 (7-9), 6-2, 6-7 (3-7), 6-4, 6-1.

The unseeded Washington, a 24-year-old American ranked 26th, advanced to the first Grand Slam quarterfinal of his career.

Wilander, a 29-year-old returning to the tournament he won three times in the 1980s, simply ran out of steam.

Two years in retirement, during which he flirted with a rock music career, took their toll in a contest that lasted four hours.

The Swede, now ranked 322nd in the world, was given a wild card entry into the tournament, which he first won in 1983.

Washington now will meet No. 9 seed Todd Martin in an all-American quarterfinal on Wednesday.



Todd Martin

the mistakes, but he also made far more winners as he overcame a bloody nose, blisters on his feet, two torn toenails and dehydration.

"It was just a matter of staying cool, and coping with the heat as best I possibly could," said Martin, who ended the match 3/4 kilograms lighter than when he started.

Johnson returned well, but had no luck in attempting to pass Edberg, who was in superb touch at the net and made a number of killing volleys.

"I played OK under the circumstances," said No. 4 seed Edberg, the Australian Open winner in 1985 and 1987. "It is never easy to play well in the heat, but I played as well as I needed to play."

Edberg showed the heat had not sapped his strength by jumping over the net at the end of the match. Earlier in the day, the heat did undermine Volkov's will.

"When I was warming up, I decided it was too hot for me," said Volkov, a semifinalist at last year's U.S. Open. "I couldn't get into the match because I was thinking of the heat."

Auster rubbed his face with ice to keep himself cool, but was presented with few problems by Volkov, who made 10 volleying errors, 53 unforced errors in all and 14 double faults in a contest that lasted only one hour, 40 minutes.

"I had no more power to fight against myself," the Russian said.

Muster made his second successive Grand Slam quarterfinal after also making the last eight at last year's U.S. Open.

The 26-year-old Austrian feared he would not play again after being hit by a drunk driver in 1989 in Miami and suffering severe knee injuries.

He has fought back to regain his place in the top 10 and won a career-high seven tournaments last year.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

U.S. calls for ceasefire in Sudan

KHARTOUM (R) — The United States has called on the Sudanese government and rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) to agree immediately to a ceasefire and to back U.N. efforts to help 2.5 million people suffering from the war. "We call on the government of Sudan and the factions of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) to end the suffering of the Sudanese people," said a statement made public on Monday by the U.S. embassy in Khartoum.

Massachusetts, Palestinians discuss economy

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Visiting Massachusetts Governor William F. Weld discussed investment opportunities in the occupied lands Monday and said the Middle East could become "the greatest tourism attraction in the entire world." Mr. Weld, leading a delegation of 50 business people and technical experts, met Monday with Palestinian peace negotiators and economists. No deals were signed Monday, but Mr. Weld said there would be further meeting between business people from both sides.

Tehran 'involved in Bakhtiar' killing

PARIS (AFP) — Iran's secret service was directly involved in the 1991 murder here of former Iranian Prime Minister Shapur Bakhtiar, according to the prosecution report. The report, submitted Monday to the judge handling the investigation, said Iran's secret service provided logistical assistance to those who carried out the assassination of Mr. Bakhtiar and his secretary on Aug. 6, 1991, in Suresnes, near Paris, a well-informed source said Monday.

8 face trial for attacking tourist bus

CAIRO (AP) — Eight suspected extremists on Monday were ordered to face trial for allegedly attacking a bus carrying South Korean tourists last year, the prosecutor's office said. The eight will be tried by a state security court and not the military courts used in cases involving radicals for more than a year. No date for the trial was set.

Mojtabaemi barred from delivering speech

TEHRAN (AFP) — A leader of Islamic radicals in Iran, Ali Akbar Mojtahedi, has been barred from delivering a speech in the northern Iranian city of Sari, a newspaper reported here Monday. Mr. Mojtahedi, a former interior minister and vocal critic of the government, was due to speak last week in a mosque in Sari, in Mazandaran province, the daily 'Johan' said. But he was forced to cancel his speech after opposition from Mazandaran's governor, it said.

Sudanese politician denied entry to Egypt

KHARTOUM (AFP) — The Egyptian authorities have denied a prominent Sudanese politician and former newspaper editor an entry visa and ordered him to return home, the government daily Al Engas Al Watani reported Monday. Monas Yagub, deputy secretary general of the government-sponsored International People's Friendship Council, was detained for more than five hours at Cairo airport Saturday.

Rebels hit Iraqi-Turkish oil pipeline

ANKARA (R) — A bomb planted by Kurdish rebels set part of a disputed Iraqi oil export pipeline on fire in southeast Turkey, a pipeline company official said Monday. The official of the state-owned pipeline company Botas said Sunday night's attack set the pipeline ablaze near the town of Cizre, at a point about 44 kilometres from the Iraqi border. There were no casualties, army firemen brought the blaze under control.

Weizman on first trip to Turkey

ANKARA (R) — Israeli President Ezer Weizman arrived in Turkey Monday to try to improve economic ties and revive talks on a project to supply Turkish water to Israel. It is the first presidential visit between the two countries, which have had diplomatic ties since Israel's creation in 1948. Turkey, a secular but Muslim country, also recognised the state of Palestine declared in 1988. Mr. Weizman, met by Foreign Minister Hikmet Cetin, did not speak to reporters at the airport. A helicopter flew him into Ankara.

Renowned British broadcaster dies

LONDON (R) — Brian Redhead, a renowned royal broadcaster whose flagship news programme helped shape Britain's political agenda, died on Sunday aged 64, his family said. Top politicians' tributes flooded in for the good-humoured interviewer who grilled them all on the British Broadcasting Corporation's (BBC) early morning 'Today' programme.

Israeli navy abducts Lebanese merchant

SIDON, Lebanon (R) — The Israeli navy has abducted a Lebanese businessman from a boat bringing him to this South Lebanon port from Egypt, security sources said on Monday. They said Hussein Hamadan, a 40-year-old dealer in construction equipment and owner of several Sidon apartment blocks, sailed for Sidon on Dec. 14. He never arrived because the boat was stopped by the Israeli navy and he was taken off, the sources said. They said Mr. Hamadan's family learned from the International Committee of the Red Cross that he was being held in Israel but did not know the reason for his seizure.

32 dead in attack on Chad barracks

NDJAMENA (AFP) — Thirty-two people were killed and dozens wounded in bloody clashes between government troops and rebels during an attack on a barracks in Abeche, 500 kilometres northeast of here, national radio said late Sunday. Government forces beat off the attack, killing 30 rebels from the National Front of Chad and losing two of their own men, the report said, adding that dozens of rebels were injured.

Russian energy minister denies fuel theft

MOSCOW (R) — Russian Atomic Energy Minister Viktor Mikhailov has denied reports that weapons-grade fuel and even nuclear warheads are being stolen from the ministry's defence installations, Itar-Tass news agency said Monday. Mr. Mikhailov sent a letter to Interior Minister Viktor Yerin asking him to stop Interior Ministry officials making statements about his ministry "based on fabrications and fantasies without appropriate expertise and documentary evidence."

Indonesian victims fear aftershocks

KAO, Indonesia (R) — Aftershocks striking this remote corner of Indonesia kept villagers fearful Monday, three days after an earthquake killed several people and destroyed hundreds of homes. Dozens of aftershocks which shook buildings and sent residents onto the streets were still being felt on the Moluccan island of Halmahera. Friday's quake, which measured 6.8 on the open-ended Richter Scale, was the most serious of several to rock Indonesia in recent months.

Peres, Qatar foreign minister met in London

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres met Qatar's Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamad Ben Jassim Al Thani in London Sunday, an Israeli foreign ministry spokesman said. Asked if he could confirm an Israeli television report that Mr. Peres met Sheikh Hamad a foreign ministry spokesman said: "Yes, I can confirm it." He did not elaborate. The television said Mr. Peres and Israeli Energy Minister Moshe Shahal met Sheikh Fahed for several hours. It said the men discussed a feasibility study on a \$1 billion project in which natural gas from Qatar would be run in a pipeline from the southern Israeli port of Eilat to the Mediterranean and on to Europe.

Jordan to study secondary boycott but no blanket move

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan has promised to closely study the status of U.S. firms subject to the secondary Arab boycott of Israel, but there will not be a blanket removal of companies from the so-called blacklist for the time being, informed sources said Wednesday.

The sources, commenting on ongoing contacts between the Jordanian government and European and American governments seeking to end the secondary boycott, said Jordan did not feel that the time is opportune to removing the secondary list altogether.

"Jordan has promised a case-by-case consideration of the companies involved on the basis of its own national interests and the interests of the company involved, but it will not extend a unilateral removal of the secondary boycott at this point in time," said one source.

The primary Arab boycott of Israel bans Arab dealings with Israeli companies as well as companies based elsewhere but owned partly or wholly by the government of Israel or Israeli nationals.

The secondary boycott applies to companies that deal with Israel or have investments in Israel or use Israeli components in their products.

The U.S. and several European countries have adopted legislation to punish companies complying with the requirements of the Arab Boycott of Israel Bureau.

In simpler terms, it means that any company providing a certificate that it is not Israeli-owned and its products do not include Israeli components and the ship carrying their products does not

call at Israeli ports could face stiff fines. These documents are required by the Arab government enforcing the boycott, and consignments unaccompanied by these certifications could be denied entry altogether into their countries.

A lifting of the secondary boycott was one of the key themes of a recent visit to the Middle East by U.S. Secretary of State Ron Brown, who held talks in Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel, the occupied territories and Egypt.

Mr. Brown argued that the secondary boycott was excluding many American companies from investing in the Middle East. Particularly, he said, Jordan could benefit from such companies' interest if it were to end the boycott.

As the secretary of commerce of the U.S., he said, it was his responsibility to address issues that concern American companies directly.

Following talks with Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat and Arab League Secretary-General Esmat Abdul Meguid, Mr. Brown said in Cairo that the boycott was "coming apart."

Mr. Brown's comments appeared to stem from the fact that several Arab countries in the Gulf have gradually removed the secondary boycott and have promised to consider an end to the primary boycott if the Arab League adopted a relevant resolution.

But the other side of the coin is that American companies now doing business with Arab countries could be encouraged to invest in Israel rather than their present Arab customers since they do not have to be apprehensive of an Arab boycott if the

blacklist was entirely removed, economists say.

They argue that at this point in time it would be even more harmful to lift the secondary boycott than the primary boycott. They say that even if the primary boycott is lifted, the Jewish state will not be able to penetrate Arab markets against stiff competition from Far Eastern countries known for their cheap prices since the cost of production in Israel is very high, and products that Israel has an edge in are not of any significant Arab consumption.

His Majesty King Hussein said in an interview with Cable News Network (CNN) television this week that progress towards lifting the secondary boycott was "happening gradually."

On lifting the primary boycott, the King said, progress could be made only in the context of a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace settlement.

"But there are several areas that have to be considered," the King said. "If you talk about, for example, Jordan and Israel, we have to work out a balance in terms of our trade... They have a protectionist approach towards their products. They have denied us the chance that they would wish for their products to come to our area."

"All these things have to be worked out, particularly with regard to the Palestinian dimension," said the King.

It was a reference to Israel's efforts to maintain the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip as protected markets for Israeli products by allowing free trade between the occupied lands and Israel while imposing customs duties on all non-Israeli products.

Old-guard veteran tipped for Algerian president

ALGIERS (R) — Independent war veteran and long-serving foreign minister, Abdul Aziz Bouteflika, is favoured to become Algeria's next president, national newspapers reported on Monday.

Mr. Bouteflika, born in 1935, is a member of the old guard that has ruled this country since it won independence from France in 1962 after a savage eight-year war.

One of former President Houari Boumedienne's few intimates, Mr. Bouteflika was named foreign minister in 1993 at the age of 59 and stayed in office until 1997.

His name surfaced the day before a national conference that is expected to endorse a presidency to replace the unelected, Five-Man High State Council that has ruled Algeria since its first multiparty elections were cancelled in January 1992.

The poll was scrapped after Muslim fundamentalists took a huge lead. Since then, Algeria has been plunged into political uncertainty and violence in which at least 1,900 people, Muslim militants, security forces and ordinary civilians, have died.

"It is very probable that the National Dialogue Commission (CDN) will propose the name of Bouteflika as president," the Arabic daily Al Khabar wrote in an unsourced article.

French-language newspapers, Le Matin and Liberte, carried similar reports, both headed "Bouteflika president?"

ANC reportedly make concessions in talks

JOHANNESBURG (Agencies) — The African National Congress (ANC) has stepped towards meeting Afrikaner demands for "limited self-rule" in South Africa, sources close to talks between the ANC, government and Freedom Alliance said Monday.

"It seems like some good proposals are on the table, they are definitely worth considering," a right-wing source said. He would not give details.

Another suggested the ANC, widely expected to win the April 27 all-race election, had suggested Afrikaners could establish a national council or Volksraad which "would run their own affairs" in post-apartheid South Africa. Government representatives

refused to comment and ANC officials were not available.

The evening daily Star said Democracy negotiators were optimistic that they could bring the Freedom Alliance into a political settlement.

The daily said negotiators from all sides were buoyant. "I think we are getting quite close to an agreement," the Johannesburg newspaper quoted a source from the Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) as saying. "There's quite a lot of hope."

The alliance, comprising the IFP, the Bophuthatswana black homeland and the white right-wing Afrikaner Volksfront, wants federal guarantees entrenched in the new constitution to take effect after the April 27 elections.

Flare-up in S. Lebanon

MARIJAYOUN (AP) — Israeli troops and militia allies traded artillery and rocket fire with guerrillas in southern Lebanon Monday, were reported killed and eight wounded in the shelling that engulfed more than 15 villages and military targets, said the sources.

The sporadic duels began overnight when resistance fighters attacked positions held by Israeli forces and the allied South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia in Israel's self-styled "security zone."

They said one SLA militiaman was killed and six were wounded in the shelling near the village of shoumariyeh. They said a civilian was killed in nearby Tameriyah and two were wounded, outside the "security zone."

Israeli military intelligence says Syria is sincere about peace

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — The head of Israel's military intelligence told Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's government that Syria was sincere about wanting peace, Israeli media reported Monday.

The assessment by Major General Uri Saguy contradicted warnings by Israel's hawkish opposition which says Syria cannot be trusted and has not given up ambitions of destroying the Jewish state.

Gen. Saguy spoke before Israel's cabinet on Sunday, a day before Israeli-Syrian peace negotiations resumed in Washington.

Syria's chief negotiator with Israel, Itamar Rabinovich, said Monday that the intelligence report would be "an important part of negotiations."

The negotiations have been deadlocked for months over who should go first — Syria in detailing what kind of peace it envisions, or Israel in saying how far it is willing to withdraw from the Golan Heights it seized in the 1967 Middle East war.

Syrian President Hafez Al Assad took a step towards Israel when he told President Bill Clinton last week that he was ready for peaceful, normal relations with Israel.

But Mr. Rabinovich said Monday that Israel wanted to hear this firsthand from the Syrians, and that it was premature to discuss the extent of Israeli withdrawal.

"Even if we have a better idea about the Syrian position



Civilians help a boy wounded by rocket shrapnel in the old Micorayan housing estate, where Afghan families have been cut off from the rest of Kabul factional fighting began some three weeks ago (AFP photo)

Afghan casualty toll nears 10,000 in 3 weeks of war

KUBAL (Agencies) — There was minimal shelling in Kabul Monday, but the casualty toll for the first three weeks of factional fighting between forces for and against President Burhanuddin Rabbani has risen to nearly 10,000.

According to figures released by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) there were 9,593 casualties admitted to the 10 functioning hospitals in Kabul for the first 21 days of battle, with a conservative estimate of 700 to 800 killed.

However, Red Cross officials pointed out that perhaps more than 2,000 of their outpatients treated were those injured in previous clashes, who returned for fresh treatment.

The relative calm in Kabul Monday was exploited by residents of the frontline new Micorayan housing estates to flee their apartments for safer northwestern parts of the capital.

Apart from the intense artillery barrage inflicted on these civilians by the Uzbek forces of the anti-Rabbani ex-communist General Abdul Rashid Dostum, and his Pushtun ally Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, they were severely bombed by a jet Sunday afternoon.

Three bombs, believed to weigh 500-kilogrammes each, were dropped by a Dostum jet on new Micorayan, narrowly missing two six-storey housing blocks and causing no casualties although residents were very frightened.

"It was like an earthquake. The whole building started to shake and I thought it would collapse on our heads," said a father of seven children, who survived the attack.

The bombs, which gouged huge craters in the ground, may have been intended for the adjacent Bibi Mahru hill where pro-Rabbani artillery is based.

Rabbani loyalists killed 90 rival militiamen and wounded 145 others in attacks on enemy positions Monday. State-run radio Kabul said.

The broadcast said the casualties were inflicted in two attacks against the forces of Gen. Dostum and Mr. Hekmatyar.

It also said at least two people were killed and two others injured when 15 rockets fired by the rival forces hit parts of Kabul.

Pakistan is hoping to bring Afghanistan's bitterly divided leaders together for talks to end a deadly three-week siege of Kabul.

A spokesman for Pakistan's foreign ministry, Mohammad Salim, said that previous peace pacts have failed because Gen. Dostum was excluded, but not this time.

"Pakistan is hopeful that this time it will succeed in bringing about peace in Afghanistan," said Mr. Salim. "Dostum's representative will be attending, which reflects a consensus on the part of the Afghan leaders and shows how serious they are this time around."

COLUMN

Balladur treated to Kohl's homely hospitality

SPEYER, Germany (R) — Mikhail Gorbachev did it. George Bush did it. Al Gore, Dan Quayle and James Baker did it. Margaret Thatcher, famously, didn't. Now Edouard Balladur has done it. Chancellor Helmut Kohl welcomed the French prime minister to his suburban home Sunday in southwestern Germany. Mr. Balladur was accorded an honour granted to a Soviet leader, a U.S. president, two vice-presidents and a secretary of state. As if to enhance the personal nature of the gesture, officials refused to give any details of the visit to Mr. Kohl's villa in Ogersheim, a middle-class suburb of the city of Ludwigshafen. It was strictly private, they said. The only public part of the meeting was a one-hour visit to the Romanesque 11th century cathedral at Speyer, one of Germany's most imposing and Kohl's traditional way of showing off his Rhineland-Palatinate home to his guests. "This was a long-standing wish to his (Balladur) and mine," Mr. Kohl told reporters as the leaders entered the cathedral. Speyer's Bishop Ansohn Schlembach spoke of the visit's significance in boosting post-war Franco-German friendship. Balladur was walking in the steps of Mr. Bismarck and Mr. Gorbachev, who both visited Ogersheim and Speyer within a week in 1990 to give their blessing to German unification, though it was not known if he, like them, was to be invited to share the local delicacy of pig's stomach (Saumagen) so beloved of Mr. Kohl. The visit was Mr. Balladur's third to Germany since he became premier last March. He already has reason to be grateful for Mr. Kohl's determined and ultimately successful efforts to prevent France becoming isolated from the rest of the European Union over its objection to the agricultural part of the Uruguay round world trade deal. Balladur had emerged from the affair as the favourite to succeed Francois Mitterrand, president when his seven-year term expires next year.

Diana screams at photographer

LONDON (R) — Princess Diana, still Britain's most popular royal despite bowing out of public life last month, screamed in rage at a photographer who took pictures of her outside a tennis club, the Daily Mirror said Monday. "Why, why, why," she shouted and accused the photographer of showing her no respect, the tabloid newspaper reported. Princess Diana, who separated from her-to-be-throne Prince Charles 13 months ago, said in December she was giving up public duty because she needed more privacy for herself and sons Prince William and Prince Harry. She said relentless media attention was partly to blame. Shortly before, 32-year-old Princess Diana was outraged when the Mirror printed photographs taken by a hidden camera, of her working out in a gym. "You make me feel like a dog," she yelled at a photographer, and condemned by all its rivals for using the gym shots, said it was now respecting her wishes for privacy by not printing the latest pictures it had been offered. But in a front-page article it quoted the photographer involved as saying: "She was very angry. She tried to get angry at times. But I tried to explain there is still a lot of interest in her, she is one of the most famous faces in the world. That is the lifestyle she has chosen. She can't opt out of everything." A poll in Tuesday newspaper showed Princess Diana was still the best loved member of the royal family, whilst Prince Charles' popularity hit all-time low. While the earnest heir to the throne was on his way to Australia for a key image-boosting tour, today newspaper published a survey showing only 17 per cent of people liked him. Princess Diana won a 47 per cent approval rating, indicating she had kept the sympathy of the public since the couple's bitter separation 13 months ago. The 93-year-old Queen Mother and reigning Queen Elizabeth came next, with 45 and 44 per cent ratings among 1,007 adults asked by the respected Mori Institute to choose their two or three royals.